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CREEDS AND CHURCHES

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*Photo: Moffat, Edinburgh*

THE VERY REV. ALEXANDER STEWART, D.D.

MODERATOR, 1911



THE CROALL LECTURES FOR 1901-2

CREEDS AND CHURCHES  
STUDIES IN SYMBOLICS

BY THE VERY REV.

ALEXANDER STEWART, D.D.

LATE PRINCIPAL AND PRIMARIUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY  
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS

AUTHOR OF 'HANDBOOK OF CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES,' ETC.

WITH A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR

Edited by the Rev.

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## P R E F A C E

FOR a generation back the study of Creeds has been limited for the most part to an historical study. The time has come to combine with that historical study a careful consideration of Creeds in their larger and more practical aspects—in brief, not only to know what Creeds are and say, but to have understanding of the mutual relations of ‘Creeds and Churches.’ Principal Stewart’s programme in this volume may be so stated. Given first a careful consideration of how Creeds arose, of the meaning of the chief Creeds, ancient and modern, and of the antecedents and circumstances that gave them birth, fundamental questions then arise regarding our existing Churches and their Creeds. What is the Church, or a Church? Is it essentially a community of life? Or is it essentially a community of belief? Is it a divinely founded institution endowed by its divine Founder with a ‘deposit’ of truth, and even receiving at His hands, purposely, the impress of a certain external organisation? Or is it a human institution, concerned with divine things, with the fact of Jesus Christ and with the salvation of men? ‘Where Christ Jesus is, there is



the Church catholic'—that, of course, is the confession of Christian men of every standpoint.

And what is a Creed? Is it *the* truth, fundamental and essential, intellectually stated? Or is it only an attempt of the Time-Spirit to 'embody' in intellectual form the living impulse which came to the World with special power at the advent of Christ?

As a guide to the historical study of Creeds and their vital significance Principal Stewart's volume will be welcomed. Theology possessed in Principal Stewart a distinguished philosophical student, trained to observe with unbiassed detachment, and yet also a man deeply interested in the actual life and work of the Churches.

Discussion of such subjects as Heresy, Venial Error and permissible Divergence, the rival claims of the theological inquirer and the guardians of our doctrinal heritage, Papal Infallibility, Ecclesiastical Unity, the necessity, philosophical and practical, for doctrinal definition, Creeds and the Bible, and Creed Revision, appropriately finds a place in the volume, which should be all the more welcome inasmuch as its constant aim is brevity so far as is consistent with lucidity.

The text of the volume is practically as Principal Stewart finally passed it for publication. The editor is responsible for the notes, appendices,

the section titles, and for almost all the marginal headings—all, however, being in accordance with Principal Stewart's plan. The editor had the privilege of going through the text of the volume twice with Principal Stewart and of receiving from him certain instructions regarding its publication.

JOHN MORRISON.



## NOTE

THE family of the late Principal Stewart tender their grateful thanks to all who have helped in the preparation of this volume. To Dr. Morrison, first and most of all, for his painstaking labours as editor; to Professor A. R. S. Kennedy for contributing the memoir of the author; to Professor Vernon Bartlet, who has read the volume in proof; and to Professor W. P. Paterson for his advice and co-operation.

E. F. S.





THE VERY REVEREND ALEXANDER STEWART,  
D.D., PRINCIPAL OF ST. MARY'S COLLEGE,  
UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS

I. EARLY YEARS

ALEXANDER STEWART was born in Liverpool of Scottish parents on the 27th January 1847. His father, also Alexander, was a much respected member of the teaching profession, endowed in a special degree with the gift of imparting knowledge, particularly in the art of calligraphy. His son, as one can well believe, is reported to have shown remarkable precocity as a child. In his case the dictum holds good that 'all able men write poetry when they are young.' Several poems even found their way into print. One is entitled 'The Christian's Love. Composed by a Boy twelve and a half Years of Age,' and is signed 'A. S.' If not remarkable as a poem, it at least shows the serious bent of Stewart's mind while he was still a child.

His early education he received in private schools, and in Queen's College, Liverpool. From the latter institution he passed, in 1864, to the University of St. Andrews, entering as the first bursar of the year. His undergraduate course was one of great distinction, more particularly in the department of philosophy, and led to his being described by the Rev. Dr. Boyd—better known in the world of letters as A. K. H. B.—then minister of St. Andrews, as the 'Admirable Crichton' of his year. In the prize lists for the academic year 1866-7 the name of Alexander Stewart stands first

in the classes of Moral Philosophy and Political Economy, both taught by Robert Flint, *clarum et venerabile nomen*.

In the following year, 1868, Stewart leapt into more than local fame in the academic world of Scotland. In addition to taking his degree (M.A.) with first-class honours in philosophy, he gained the Ferguson Scholarship in Mental Philosophy, open to competition among graduates of all the four Scottish Universities. One of the examiners on this occasion, Professor Spencer Baynes, afterwards described Stewart's papers as 'remarkable both for the range and accuracy of philosophical knowledge, and for clearness of exposition.'

The distinction, however, to which Principal Stewart, in later years, looked back with the greatest satisfaction was the award, in the same year, of the 'Rector's Prize,' and the correspondence that followed, for the Lord Rector of St. Andrews University at this period was the philosopher John Stuart Mill, then at the height of his fame. The subject prescribed for the prize essay of the session 1867-8 bore the portentous title, 'The Logical and Psychological Questions involved in the Controversy between Nominalism and Realism; and on any Remains of Realism in the Schools of the Present Day.' Mill was himself the adjudicator, and the prize of £25 went to Alexander Stewart. In reply to a letter from the successful competitor acknowledging its receipt, Mill wrote as follows:—

AVIGNON, 7th April 1868.

DEAR SIR,—I was very glad to receive your letter, and shall always be happy to hear from you, so that I may not lose sight of one whom I think capable of rendering very useful service to Philosophy. Without having your able Essay before me, I could not satisfactorily discuss with you its different points. But I may say that I observed in it

(besides a very unusual amount of well-directed research into the history of the controversy respecting the function of General Names, and the many shades of opinion which have existed on the subject) ample evidence of a mind which unites a real power of original speculation with an accurate study and a careful and candid appreciation of the speculations of others.

I may mention that few things in your Essay made a more favourable impression on me than your occasional criticisms on myself, which showed more acuteness and clearness of thought than most of those I have received, while they do not affect any points that I consider fundamental, nor do they contain anything which, looked at from my own point of view, indicates any illogical or unphilosophical tendencies or habits of thought.—I am, dear Sir,  
very sincerely yours,  
J. S. MILL.

ALEXANDER STEWART, Esq.

In subsequent correspondence Mill expresses approval of Stewart's intention to proceed to Germany for the further study of philosophy, adding, 'I hope you will never scruple to ask me any questions on any of the subjects of your philosophical studies, or to let me know when there is any mode in which I can assist them. I should be sorry to lose sight of a thinker and student of so great promise'—words which are as significant of the great philosopher's goodness of heart as they are flattering to the young student.

The intended visit to Germany, however, was not carried out until the following summer, and in the autumn of this year (1868) Stewart entered St. Mary's College with a view to the ministry of the Church of Scotland. The St. Andrews Divinity Hall at this time had a distinguished staff of

teachers, including Tulloch, its genial Principal, eminent both as a theologian and as a churchman, and Mitchell, the historian of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. To Principal Tulloch Stewart many years later paid a grateful tribute on the occasion of his own induction as Principal of St. Mary's. 'No one,' he said, 'who came under the influence of that impressive personality, of that mind as massive as the frame it inhabited, of that warm heart and deep sincerity, could fail to be moved at the remembrance. . . . To have been a pupil of Tulloch's was to any man an unspeakable boon and a cause for lifelong gratitude.'

The intervals between the winter sessions in St. Andrews were spent at the Universities of Heidelberg (1869) and Leipzig (1870), where Stewart attended lectures on theology and philosophy. In addition to gaining an insight into German thought and method, he learned from his contact with the students of another land much that contributed to produce the broad-minded sympathy which was later to distinguish his relations with his own students both at Aberdeen and at St. Andrews.

## II. MINISTER OF MAINS AND STRATHMARTINE, 1873-88

In due course Alexander Stewart was licensed by the Presbytery of St. Andrews as a 'preacher of the Gospel.' After a short period of probation, during which he acted as assistant at St. Cyrus, near Montrose, and in the East Parish of St. Nicholas, Aberdeen, he was appointed to the parish of Mains and Strathmartine near Dundee, where a fruitful ministry of over fourteen years was spent. In 1874 he married Isabella, the eldest of the three daughters of the late James Meston, a successful chartered accountant in Aberdeen.

While discharging the ordinary round of parish duties with the scrupulous conscientiousness which marked everything he took in hand, Mr. Stewart found time to continue his theological and philosophical studies, devoting special attention to the philosophy of religion and to Christian ethics. Three years after being settled in Mains, he received from the Church the first public recognition of his attainments as a scholar. This was his appointment as a member of the Synod Board of Examiners for the University of St. Andrews, a select body for the examination of students at their entrance to, and exit from, the Divinity Hall. In 1881 there followed the examinership in Mental Philosophy in his Alma Mater. Apart from magazine and newspaper articles, Stewart's first literary adventure falls within this period. With his friend and future colleague, the Rev. Allan Menzies, minister of Abernethy, he collaborated in the translation of the first volume of Professor Pfeleiderer's *Philosophy of Religion* (1886).

### III. ABERDEEN, 1887-94

The Chair of Systematic Theology in the University of Aberdeen is unique among the divinity chairs of the Scottish Universities. In terms of its foundation the candidates for this chair have to submit to a competitive examination conducted by a body of examiners appointed by the Presbyteries of the Synod of Aberdeen and by the University. Early in 1887 the chair became vacant through the death of Professor Samuel Trail, a scholarly divine of the old school. The usual 'contestation,' as it is quaintly termed, was held, and the winner, in a specially strong 'field,' was the Rev. Alexander Stewart, M.A., minister of Mains and Strathmartine.

Professor Stewart's inaugural lecture at the opening of the winter session 1887-8 proved to the students and public of Aberdeen that a new and vitalising force had come amongst them. In William Milligan, who adorned the Chair of Biblical Criticism, and Alexander Stewart, the Aberdeen Divinity Hall possessed two of the most competent teachers of any theological seminary in the country. The present writer, it may be permitted to add, joined the Divinity Faculty in the third week of the same session.

Stewart threw himself heart and soul into the congenial work of his chair. The teaching was on unaccustomed lines, and introduced the students to the latest advances in theological science. A course was begun in Christian Ethics, the first of its kind, it was then believed, in any Scottish University. Other courses were those in Homiletics, in which the future preachers of the Church received most helpful instruction in the difficult craft of sermon-making, and in Christian Evidences, which formed the basis of the valuable text-book published a few years later.

A word may be added here as to Professor Stewart's method of lecturing. As far back as 1871, in a series of newspaper articles on 'Student Life in Germany,' he had discussed the various styles of lecturing then in vogue in the Fatherland. 'Some professors dictate a paragraph, and then rapidly explain and comment upon it; others deliver the whole lecture slowly, so that the substance of it can be easily taken down; others again read rapidly and energetically, more as though their hearers were opponents to be convinced than students to be instructed.' Professor Stewart adopted the first of these methods. The substance of the lecture was carefully dictated in short carefully worded paragraphs, each paragraph being followed

by explanatory remarks usually delivered extempore, but sometimes written out in part.

In *Alma Mater*, the Aberdeen University Magazine, of 9th March 1892, a discerning student wrote of his professor : ' His lectures, his examinations, his criticisms are all models in their kind. His class-lectures . . . in their own way are masterpieces. At first, indeed, they strike one as cold, even dry. But you soon find out that it is because they are so clear that they are cold, having too many windows, so to speak. Here and there, too, the clear-cut sentences admit a side remark which flushes over them a quiet and graceful feeling, charming expressions of encouragement and sympathy which the student will not forget. It is when one remembers these that the cold, clear lectures seem so valuable to oneself. They are thoroughly honest, thoroughly scientific. You have not much of the man himself in them, but the little you do have you will remember and admire.'

In 1888 the Professor's *Alma Mater*, as was expected, rewarded the victor in the northern 'contestations' by bestowing upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. To anticipate a little Dr. Stewart's subsequent *cursum honorum*, it may be entered here that Glasgow University followed with the same honour in 1901, as did Aberdeen in 1906, on the occasion of the quatercentenary of the foundation of King's College and University.

Dr. Stewart had not been long a member of the *Senatus* before it was realised that in him we had received into our number not only a distinguished scholar, but a clear-headed and far-seeing administrator. Accordingly, on the retirement of Professor Milligan from the post of Secretary of *Senatus*, Stewart was unanimously elected his successor. It was a difficult time. The Scottish Universities Commission

was at work overhauling the whole University system of the country, and introducing drastic changes as to the wisdom of which there was much difference of opinion. Frequent and prolonged meetings of the Senatus rendered the Secretary's post anything but a sinecure. Dr. Stewart, however, was equal to every demand that was made upon him, and was gaining an experience of University administration of which St. Andrews was soon to reap the benefit.

About the same time (1890) a movement was set on foot by the then Principal of the University (Sir W. D. Geddes) for the restoration of the chapel of King's College, which dates from 1500, to something more nearly approaching its original beauty. With this movement Dr. Stewart was in fullest sympathy and did much to help it forward. Indeed, he used to say that he knew every stone of the venerable pile, and when leaving for St. Andrews, a few years later, he expressed his great regret that he could not take the chapel with him!

During his seven years in Aberdeen, Professor Stewart took a considerable part in the public life of the community. He was in constant demand in the city and elsewhere as a preacher at anniversary and other special services, and was already keenly interested in those educational problems which in later years claimed so much of his time and strength.

#### IV. ST. ANDREWS, 1894-1915

In the summer of 1893 the Principalship of St. Mary's College—the Divinity Hall of St. Andrews University—with which is conjoined the office of Primarius Professor of Divinity, became vacant through the death of Principal John Cunningham. Professor Stewart resolved to offer his services to his Alma Mater. The patronage of all the



St. Andrews divinity chairs is vested in the Crown, that is, in practice, in the Secretary for Scotland for the time being. There was some delay in filling the vacancy, but ultimately, in March of the following year, Dr. Stewart's appointment was announced.

Of the many friends who congratulated the Principal on his new dignity, none wrote more cordially than the minister and friend of his student days, the well-known Dr. A. K. H. Boyd: 'Putting quite apart my warm personal regard for yourself, and the circumstances which have made me watch your career with extreme interest all through, I rejoice for the sake of the Kirk that we are to have such a Professor, and for the sake of righteousness that a man should be promoted simply because he deserves it,—not the invariable way. . . . To fill, with the approval of all whose approval is worth anything, the chair of Tulloch and Cunningham, is an honour to any man, and I believe you will not stand second to any of your predecessors.'

Another friend of more recent date, Principal Fairbairn of Mansfield College, Oxford, wrote in a similar strain: 'There is no office in all Scotland which boasts a more ancient or illustrious past; and any man might feel proud and honoured to be called to occupy the seat which will henceforth be yours.'

Principal Stewart was inducted at the opening of the session 1894-5. As the subject of his inaugural address to the students of divinity, he chose 'The Problem of Authority in Religion.' In dealing with this difficult problem Dr. Stewart claimed that theology, as the interpretation of the universe and of the life of man, must be founded not upon one or two elements of human knowledge, but upon all taken together. A Christian faith which would stand and resist the attacks of its adversaries must rest on

grounds which are partly historical, partly experimental, and partly philosophical. Similarly, the problem of authority in religion, he maintained, 'admits of no complete or final solution which is founded upon one or two departments of human knowledge, which does not sum them all up and lay all life, all truth, all creatural existence at the feet of God. It will be my aim in conducting this class to show how the various departments of knowledge contribute to the enrichment of theological science; how nature and humanity, history and Scripture, furnish its material and shape its ends.'

In the general conduct of his class Principal Stewart proceeded on the lines which his former experience had approved. The method of lecturing by the dictation of paragraphs, for example, to which reference has already been made, was continued, as appears from the following extract from a later article in *College Echoes*, the St. Andrews University magazine: 'One marvels at the skill with which the subject-matter is compressed into a few concise and terse sentences. But the paragraphs are invaluable when one returns to them after struggling through the pages of the larger text-books. They might be described as Divinity in a nutshell. Bear witness those who have sat the B.D.!' Special pains were taken in St. Andrews, as in Aberdeen, to instruct the future ministers of the Church in the preparation of their pulpit discourses, and in the varied duties of their sacred calling.

The following appreciation of Principal Stewart and his work as a theological teacher has been kindly supplied by the Rev. John Dall, B.D., a former St. Andrews student, now Professor of Church History, Queen's Theological College, Kingston, Ontario:—

'The late Principal Stewart, as a teacher, gave a greater

impression of solidity than of brilliance ; and, while this lack of the more obvious and superficial qualities rendered appreciation a matter of slower growth, the appreciation was all the more sincere and lasting on that account. In Principal Stewart's teaching there was none of that rhetoric which so frequently serves to make the lack of a sense of proportion pass for inspiration. But, as their course went on, men came to realise vividly that, when the Principal had dealt with a subject, it had been dealt with faithfully and thoroughly. No important aspect of it was left untouched, no reasonable opinion that had been passed upon it was neglected,—and whatever conclusion was reached might be relied upon as the result of a balanced judgment upon all the relevant facts and evidence. He gave the impression of a man who possessed wide learning, but was the master and not the victim of his erudition ; nor was he easily blown about by every wind of doctrine ; and his teaching, while soundly critical, was as wisely and cautiously conservative as it was clear and thorough. The longer a man was brought under its influence, the more confidently he relied upon its trustworthiness ; and I am inclined to the opinion that there are many others besides myself who have only realised their full indebtedness to the Divinity class since they left the quiet of St. Mary's to face the strain of preaching and teaching. The class was valuable for other things besides its formal teaching. As a helpful critic of discourses, the Principal had no superior and could have had few equals ; and his devotions were perfect in their reverence and beauty of expression. We recognised and respected his homiletic judgment and his remarkable gift of prayer, and often used to say among ourselves how near perfection he would have been as a teacher of Pastoral Theology.

‘ In his personal dealings with the students,—and no one would claim that our Halls are tenanted by a majority of precocious saints,—the Principal was a man whose inflexible justice erred, when it did err, upon the side of generosity and kindness; no man who honestly endeavoured to do his work could say that he found in Principal Stewart anything other than a good friend, willing to take any pains for his benefit and advancement.

‘ It is not easy for a former student to single out any department or any teacher, where all were admirable,—but death confers a melancholy distinction,—and, after a number of years spent as minister and teacher, the present writer looks back to no teacher with more affection and respect, to no class with a greater sense of benefit received, than to Principal Stewart and Divinity. It is no exaggeration to say that, among those who were students during his time in St. Mary’s, academic grief for the departed head of the College was intensified by a sense of personal loss.’

In addition to his work as Primarius Professor of Divinity, Principal Stewart soon became engrossed in the work of University administration. As Principal of St Mary’s he was not only a member of the Senate, but *ex officio* a member of the University Court, the governing body of the University. The early years of his principalship were years of storm and stress in the quiet University city. In common with the other Scottish Universities, St. Andrews was still engaged in adjusting itself to the new conditions which were the outcome of the Universities Act, 1889, and of the ordinances issued by the Universities Commission which it set up. Unhappily the situation in St. Andrews was immensely complicated by the problem of the future relation of the ancient University to the modern University College,

Dundee, a problem which led to prolonged litigation, and the intense embitterment of local feeling both within the University and without. Principal Stewart took office at the time when, in the words of Principal Donaldson, St. Andrews was 'in the midst of an imbroglio such as probably never took place before in any Scottish University' (*University Addresses*, p. 328), and years were to elapse before a witty professor of another University was able to report that 'peace was raging in St. Andrews.'

It would serve no useful purpose to stir up the ashes of a controversy now happily settled. Let it suffice to say that, man of peace though he was, Principal Stewart took his share in the fray. His openness of mind, however, and his faculty for seeing the good points on both sides prevented him from becoming a violent partisan.

A brief reference must also suffice to another dispute which led to a considerable amount of local friction, and in which the Principal of St. Mary's had likewise to take a leading part. For something like a century and a half the congregation of St. Leonard's had worshipped in the chapel of the old college of St. Salvator, or 'the College Church,' as it was usually termed. About 1898 the University authorities resolved to institute a religious service for the benefit of the students and the other members of the University, and for this purpose they naturally wished to resume possession of their venerable chapel. Into the details of the controversy, to which, in addition to the University and the congregation of St. Leonard's, the Presbytery of St. Andrews and the heritors of St. Leonard's parish were parties, it is unnecessary to enter. In the end a new church was provided for the 'outed' congregation, and the University entered into sole possession of the chapel, with the pleasing result that in it are now held not only regular

Sunday services throughout the session, but a short daily service attended by teachers and students.

It is a relief to turn from these contentious topics to the yeoman service rendered by Principal Stewart to the cause of education in what may be called the province of St. Andrews. At the time of his death he had been for many years Chairman of the Governors of Madras College, St. Andrews. In the wider and more important field of the training of teachers for the secondary and elementary schools of Scotland he did splendid pioneer work, an account of which has been kindly supplied by one who was afterwards intimately associated with him in this work, Mr. James Malloch, Director of Studies, Training College, Dundee :—

‘ It was mainly on the initiative of Principal Stewart that the University system for the training of teachers was commenced first of all at St. Andrews. Along with Principal Donaldson he elaborated a scheme of King’s studentships under the approval of the Scottish Education Department, and this scheme was in operation most successfully for several years before the revolutionary change which was brought about by the Minute of Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, dated 30th January 1905. This Minute created four Provincial Committees in close connection with the Universities, for the express purpose of enlarging and improving existing facilities for the training of teachers and establishing machinery whereby the transference of management from the various church organisations to the newly constituted committees could be easily effected.

‘ Principal Stewart was a member of the St. Andrews committee from its inception, and on the retirement of Principal Donaldson from the chairmanship in October 1906, he was unanimously appointed its chairman. He guided the committee for six years during the trying period

when the new system of training was being laboriously built up. His wisdom at every stage of the difficult negotiations was of immense value to the committee, and his wonderful knowledge of Scottish educational effort in the past gave clear guidance by which future progress could best be made.

‘The St. Andrews and Dundee Training College is now firmly established; a large new Training College is being built; hostels for residence have been in use for several years and full courses for the training of special teachers and teachers of higher subjects are in operation. In all of these directions Principal Stewart’s shrewdness and care, and his unfailing courtesy and tact in the management of the committee’s business, were the principal factors in what has been a striking instance of the great progress recent years have witnessed in the true and thorough preparation of teachers for their life’s work.’

In the early summer of 1907 the Principal and his family sustained an irreparable loss in the death, after a brief illness, of Mrs. Stewart. Inheriting much of her father’s shrewd judgment, Mrs. Stewart had been for more than thirty years her husband’s counsellor. In addition to ‘looking well to the ways of her household’ and exercising a generous hospitality at St. Mary’s, she was an unsparing worker in every effort for the welfare of the Church and the community.

The year 1911 was the most strenuous, as it was the most memorable, in the life of Principal Stewart. In the month of March he represented his University on a deputation to King George at Buckingham Palace, organised by the Bible Societies on the occasion of the tercentenary of the ‘Authorised Version’ of the English Bible. The month of May

saw him elected Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and at the same time stricken with an illness almost 'unto death'; the months of June and July brought a succession of notable functions at which he was present in his official capacity as Moderator. Of all these some account will be given in another connection.

In September of the same year, the University of St. Andrews celebrated with great *éclat* the five-hundredth anniversary of its foundation (1411-1911). Representatives of the Universities of Europe and America assembled in the old cathedral city to do honour to the most venerable of our Scottish Universities. One of the most memorable events in connection with the celebration was the impressive service in the recently restored parish church of St. Andrews. At this service, which was attended by all the delegates in full academic costume, the sermon was preached by Principal Stewart, then, as has just been said, Moderator of the Church of Scotland.

'It was a sermon,' wrote one who was present, 'worthy of the high occasion—dignified, full of memorable phrases, full of love for St. Andrews. The hearers will long remember the vivid picture of the rejoicings at the foundation of the University, and the contrast drawn between the haste of to-day and the patience of yesterday, when things moved slowly, when the Cathedral of St. Andrews took a hundred and fifty years to build, and men had the courage to found a University without revenues, without buildings, almost without students. One will not easily forget how the preacher's voice thrilled us as he uttered the words "Alma Mater"—with the broad "a" sound of good Scotch Latin—or the invocation with which the sermon closed, that in the dark ways of the future the Power which had hitherto guided her might never forsake her.'



Since the more outstanding incidents and engagements of the Principal's remaining years were more intimately connected with the Church than with the University, they may be held over for the present.

#### V. PRINCIPAL STEWART AS A CHURCHMAN

Although Principal Stewart was first of all a University teacher and administrator, much of his time and energy, more especially in his later years, was ungrudgingly spent in the service of his Church. Yet while he loved the Church of his fathers with a great love, and served her right faithfully to the end, he was not an ecclesiastic, as this term is usually understood in Scotland. It may have been from a certain over-sensitiveness, or from the lack of ambition, or from both combined, but the fact remains that Dr. Stewart did not seek distinction, or aim at leadership, in the courts of the Church. Even in the General Assembly, its highest court, over which he was one day to be called to preside, he all too seldom gave the 'fathers and brethren' the benefit of his experience and counsel.

While still parish minister at Mains, Mr. Stewart, as he then was, had the reputation of being an exceptionally thoughtful and attractive preacher. 'His preaching was from the first of marked excellence,' writes Professor Menzies in the course of a fine tribute to his colleague (see below). 'But he never preached over the heads of his people; to the end he dealt in common themes, and dealt more in the broad and general aspects of Christian truth than in specific doctrine or exegesis. On a special occasion he would take a wider range, and show evidence of his great theological knowledge and culture in discussing the attitude of the Church to her doctrine or her duty to her people.'

In Aberdeen, Dr. Stewart alternated with his colleagues

of the Chairs of Church History and Biblical Criticism in conducting the Sunday services in the chapel of King's College. In those days one had the privilege of listening to three men of very different gifts, each of whom, as preacher, gave distinction to the chapel services—William Milligan, Alexander Stewart, and Henry Cowan,—and of whom the last alone survives. The characteristics of Dr. Stewart's preaching, it will generally be admitted, were elevation of thought, elegance and lucidity of style, and an almost perfect elocution. Notwithstanding the excellence of matter and form, however, he can scarcely be described as a 'popular' preacher. For this, his 'delivery,' as we say in Scotland, was too restrained; it lacked the *abandon* and fire of the popular orator; his appeal was always more to the intellect than to the emotions of his audience.

Principal Stewart was a member of several of the standing committees of the Church, and for many years was one of the vice-conveners of the Committee on Temperance. The committee, however, with which he was specially identified was that on Education for the Ministry, whereof he was convener from 1898 to 1915. To the General Assembly of the latter year he gave in his resignation, a few weeks, as it proved, before his death. One little thought, as he stood to receive the thanks of the Assembly through its Moderator for his services as Convener, that his work, not only for his committee but for his Church, was done, and that never again would his voice be heard in her highest court.

During the years of Dr. Stewart's convenership not a few improvements were introduced into the Divinity curriculum. The session, for example, was lengthened to twenty weeks, although in the opinion of some it is still too short and too crowded for the amount of work to be overtaken. For the

Latin dissertation on some controverted head in Divinity a theological essay in English has been substituted. Some relaxation of the ordinary conditions has also been made to meet the case of aspirants for the ministry who begin their University course at the age of twenty-three and upwards.

In 1907 the General Assembly adopted the following deliverance: 'The General Assembly remit to the Committee on Education for the Ministry to draft for submission to next General Assembly a scheme of what they think would be a wide and comprehensive reconstruction of the methods of ministerial training, with special reference to instruction in Bible Knowledge.' Principal Stewart took up the subject of this remit with much enthusiasm. As he told his students in his address at the opening of the session 1907-8: 'To me, and indeed to the committee generally, the problem thus formulated is no new problem. For many years I have been anxiously looking for the prospect and possibility of doing something to develop and carry into effect such a reconstruction, to place the methods of ministerial training upon modern lines, and adapt them to the present-day needs of the Church.'

It is to be regretted that this address has not been published in an accessible form, for it shows how one of the foremost scholars and clearest heads in the Church viewed the present defects in our Divinity curriculum, and with what foresight and courage he was prepared to deal with the necessary expansion of theological education on both its theoretical and practical sides. The remit of 1907 unfortunately still engages the attention of the committee. The reason that so little progress has been made in devising the 'wide and comprehensive reconstruction' desired by the Assembly must be sought mainly in the want of agree-

ment in the committee as to the nature and extent of the necessary modifications of the present system, and as to the means available for giving effect thereto. In more recent years, also, since the emergence of the question of union between the two leading Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, it has been felt that the time for devising a more comprehensive scheme of theological education will come with the amalgamation of the Divinity schools of the two Churches, which would be one of the results of union, should it eventually be realised.

Even before Presbyterian union—of which, needless to say, he warmly approved—had become a question of practical Church politics, Dr. Stewart had advocated co-operation between the Universities and the theological colleges of the United Free Church. Indeed his vision of the future of theological education in Scotland was not limited to the Presbyterian Churches, for on more than one occasion he publicly proposed a federation of the Divinity schools of all the Protestant Churches with a view to ending the present overlapping and waste of resources, and to securing a much needed addition to the subjects at present taught in our colleges.

It has been said above that Principal Stewart did not aspire to leadership in the Church. Nevertheless, when occasion demanded, he had the courage of his convictions, and did not shrink from giving them expression. A conspicuous illustration of this characteristic, and at the same time of the Principal's statesmanlike foresight, is found in the position which he took up in the Assembly of 1903 on the question of the Church's policy in a matter of critical importance. For thirty years, more or less, the question of the Church's relation to her confessional standards had been repeatedly before her supreme court. This year (1903)

it was again before the Assembly. A long debate ensued, in the course of which Principal Stewart moved that it be remitted 'to a committee to consider whether an approach should not be made to the legislature in connection with the Confession of Faith and formula, and what form such an appeal should take.' Few supported him in this straightforward and 'thorough' policy, the majority considering the time inopportune.

A year passed, and in the autumn of 1904 the House of Lords gave judgment in the famous Church Case. Although it did not directly concern the Church as by law established, this judgment had 'at any rate an indirect bearing upon the relationship subsisting between Church and State in Scotland' (Church Reports, 1905). Several of the ministers who had supported Principal Stewart in 1903 now wrote urging him to come forward and take the lead in a movement for approaching Parliament in the altered situation. By this time, however, the recognised leaders of the Church were prepared to take action, with the result that the Assembly of 1905 adopted the policy considered to be inopportune two years before. It was agreed to appeal to the Government of the day to pass an Act granting the Church of Scotland greater freedom in her relation to the Confession of Faith. The Government was sympathetic, but preferred to deal with the matter by means of a clause (Clause 5) in the Churches (Scotland) Act, 1905, promoted in the interests of the dispossessed United Free Church. By this clause the Church of Scotland secured by statute the right to modify her formula of subscription to the Confession of Faith. It was not, however, till 1910 that the Church finally agreed upon the adoption of the less stringent formula to which her ministers are now required to subscribe (see Appendix H).

## VI. MODERATOR, 1911

Universal satisfaction was expressed when it became known, in the autumn of 1910, that Principal Stewart had been nominated for the highest office in the 'unhierarchical Kirk' of Scotland, that of Moderator of its General Assembly. Among no class was this satisfaction keener than among his colleagues of the four Divinity Faculties. Sixteen years had passed since one of their number had filled the Moderator's chair, although of the preceding seventeen Moderators, from 1878 to 1894, no fewer than six had been teachers in the Divinity Halls, including both Stewart's immediate predecessors at St. Mary's, Tulloch and Cunningham.

The Assembly of 1911 was opened on the 23rd May with the usual ceremony, the King's representative, or 'Lord High Commissioner,' on this occasion being Edward Priaulx, Lord Glenconner. The retiring Moderator, the Right Rev. Dr. Macadam Muir, in proposing Dr. Stewart as his successor, concluded a generous eulogy with the words: 'This year when all eyes are turning to the University of St. Andrews, which will in autumn celebrate its five-hundredth anniversary, it is most fitting that the Principal of the theological college of that "primatial city by the eastern wave" should receive the highest honour which the Scottish Church has it in its power to bestow.'

To the intense regret of the Assembly and of the Church at large, Principal Stewart was unable again to occupy the Moderator's chair until the last day but one of the sittings of the court. On the evening of the day that had opened so auspiciously, he was struck down with a dangerous illness, from which, at first, it seemed doubtful if he would recover. Happily the danger passed, and by the morning

of Tuesday, 30th May, the Moderator had sufficiently recovered to be able to receive in his hotel a deputation of his former students, who presented him with an address expressive of their gratitude to him as their teacher, and of their gratification at the high honour which he had received 'with the hearty approbation of the whole Church.'

It was not, however, until the following Thursday that Dr. Stewart was allowed by his medical advisers to preside over the Assembly, from the members of which he received a hearty and sympathetic welcome. The subject of his closing address on the following day was 'The Religious Use of the Imagination.' As the address was published immediately afterwards, it will be sufficient to say that the Assembly has rarely listened to a more thoughtful or a more stimulating pronouncement from the Moderator's chair, or one marked by more graceful diction. In the words of the graceful tribute to Principal Stewart read at the closing meeting of the Assembly of 1916, 'no member of that General Assembly will ever forget the pathetic circumstances in which his impressive closing address was delivered, immediately after a sudden and critical illness which brought him very near to the gates of death, and from which at the time he had only partially recovered: to those present it appeared almost as a message from the other world.'

The duties falling to be discharged by the Moderator of the Church of Scotland during his year of office are at all times of the most varied and arduous nature. Apart, however, from the ordinary routine of his high office there fell to Principal Stewart duties such as, in combination, had fallen to none of his predecessors, as the sequel will show.

The first of these was his presence, as the representative head of the Church of Scotland, at the coronation of their Majesties King George and Queen Mary, in Westminster

Abbey. It was a surprise to all his friends that, within three weeks of his serious illness, Principal Stewart was able to undertake the journey to London and the trying round of engagements that there awaited him. But a visitor to the breakfast-room of his hotel about 6 o'clock on the morning of Coronation Day (22nd June 1911) would have discovered him, along with other high officials of the Church, all in becoming court dress, preparing for the long and exhausting ceremony that lay before them. And in the evening, notwithstanding the fatigues of the day, the Moderator was one of the same company that with a few others, relatives and friends, spent some happy hours together as a fitting close to a great occasion. On the following Saturday he greatly enjoyed the wonderful spectacle of the Naval Review, and on Tuesday he was a guest at the garden-party given by their Majesties at Buckingham Palace.

On these followed, a month later, another series of historic ceremonies in the Scottish capital. In July the King and Queen, accompanied by the Prince of Wales and the Princess Mary, paid their first State visit to Edinburgh. The ancient palace of Holyrood was once more graced by the presence of royalty.

On the morning after their arrival their Majesties received at the palace a number of deputations from institutions and public bodies. The first to be received was a deputation from the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, headed by the Right Reverend the Moderator, who read a loyal address from His Majesty's 'most loyal, most devoted, and most dutiful subjects, the ministers and elders of the Church of Scotland convened in General Assembly.'

In the evening of the same day a State dinner was given by their Majesties, at which the Moderator, in virtue of his precedence in Scotland, had his place next to the King.



On the following day, Wednesday, 19th July, was held the stately and impressive service in the old cathedral of St. Giles. At the western door of the Church the royal party was received by representatives of Church and State, at their head the Moderator, who preceded their Majesties up the nave, presided during the service, and, at its close, pronounced the benediction.

A pleasant but much needed change from these brilliant but exciting pageants was afforded by a week spent in August on the island of Iona, where he preached the Moderator's annual sermon in the Abbey Church, now in part restored. By September he was back in St. Andrews for the celebration of the quincenary of the University, to which reference has been already made.

The following winter (1911-12) was fully occupied by the usual round of engagements falling to the Moderator for the year, in which the opening of new churches and the re-opening of churches enlarged or restored figure with unfailing regularity. In the end of October we find Principal Stewart presiding and speaking at a great public meeting in support of the foreign missions of the Church; a week later he is doing the same at 'the united closing meeting' of a Gospel Temperance Campaign conducted by the Presbytery of Glasgow. Later still we find him preaching in Aberdeen from his old pulpit in the College Chapel—the pulpit, be it noted, of his namesake, good Bishop Stewart (1532-45)—and delivering the Murtle Lecture on 'The Church of the Future' in the beautiful Mitchell Hall of Marischal College. And so throughout the winter, until in the month of March 1912 he is laid aside by an attack of illness similar to that of the preceding May.

In April Principal Stewart was able to proceed to the United States, accompanied by Miss Stewart, now and to

the end his devoted and watchful companion. The object of this hurried visit was to take part, as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Mother Church, in the centenary celebrations at Princeton Theological Seminary. Time was found for a flying visit to Canada, from which Dr. Stewart returned in time for the meetings of the Assembly in the end of May.

From the numerous engagements of the year 1913 we may single out the meeting of the delegates of the Pan-Presbyterian Alliance, as it is generally termed, held in Aberdeen in the month of June. One of the early sederunts was devoted to the consideration of the important subject of 'Authority in matters of Faith.' Three papers were read on different aspects of the subject; the second, by Principal Stewart, discussed the 'Authority of the Scriptures,' a topic with which he was eminently qualified to deal.

From the following year, 1914, there is nothing outstanding to chronicle until we come to the epoch-making events of July and August. Principal Stewart was then enjoying a period of rest with his family in their Highland home in Perthshire. In common with many who, like himself, had drunk deep at the springs of German thought, he was saddened beyond measure by the obsession of the intellectual leaders of Germany, and by the increasing evidence of the degeneration of the German character. At the opening of the winter session, destined, alas, to be his last, he addressed his students on 'Our Attitude to German Theology.' This address, in which is seen how closely the Principal had followed the recent trend of German philosophy, and how clearly he understood the aims of German militarism, was subsequently published, along with a war sermon preached in the University chapel, in pamphlet form under the title 'In War Time.'

The work of the session was considerably interrupted by illness. The month of June, 1915, was spent as usual in his country retreat at Aberfoyle. 'The first of July,' in his daughter's words, 'saw him back at St. Andrews apparently reinvigorated in mind and body, but after one short week another attack came suddenly upon him. For a few days it seemed as if he were pulling round again in his old wonderful manner, but the constantly recurring illness of the preceding six months had left him less fit than usual to battle against a severe attack. And though he made a brave fight for the sake of those who loved him, he passed peacefully to his rest on the afternoon of Wednesday, 21st July 1915.' He was laid beside his wife under the shadow of the old cathedral, within sight and sound of the sea, where around him lie many whose paths in life had been closely linked with his own.

He has left behind him, to cherish the memory of the most affectionate of parents, a family of three sons, all settled overseas, and three daughters, the second of whom is the wife of Professor Jehu of the Chair of Geology in the University of Edinburgh.

## VII. LITERARY WORK

Principal Stewart's contributions to theological literature are comparatively few in number. The engrossing duties of his double office left him but scant leisure for literary work; in recent years, as we have seen, he was handicapped by impaired health and failing eyesight, and at all times there was the lack of literary ambition. But 'in quality we have much from him, if not in quantity' (see Professor Menzies' tribute given hereafter).

Apart from occasional magazine articles and his joint-translation of the first part of Pfeleiderer's *Philosophy of*

*Religion*, already mentioned, Dr. Stewart's first independent work was a *Handbook of Christian Evidences*. It was first published in 1892 in the phenomenally successful series of Guild Text-books issued by the 'Life and Work' Committee of the Church of Scotland. A 'revised and enlarged' edition appeared in 1895. Over 40,000 copies in all have been sold, in addition to some 5000 of the larger form of the same work in the 'Guild Library.' This unpretending manual has been universally recognised as one of the most effective defences of the truth of Christianity that have appeared in our time. Its comprehensiveness in spite of its moderate compass, its emphasis on the essential things, and the sure grasp and well-balanced judgment of the writer have commended it to teachers and students of all the Churches, not only in Scotland but in England and across the seas.

Dr. Stewart's next considerable contribution was his cautious and comprehensive article 'Bible'—the first of several—in Dr. Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. i., 1898. Twenty years ago it was more difficult, for obvious reasons, to write such an article than it would be at the present day, but in this case it will be conceded that the writer has successfully steered his course between the Scylla of advanced criticism and the Charybdis of ultra-conservatism. By many reviewers the article was singled out for special notice, and in almost every case for special commendation.

To Dent's 'Temple Series of Bible Characters and Scripture Handbooks,' Principal Stewart contributed a short *Life of Christ* (1906), planned on somewhat original lines, and marked by judicious selection of theme and incident and by characteristic grace of style.

In this connection the helpful essay on 'The Pronunciation of Scripture Proper Names,' prefixed to Hastings'

*Dictionary of the Bible*, in one volume (1909), should not be overlooked. The Moderator's address on 'The Religious Use of the Imagination,' and the recent pamphlet, 'In War Time,' have already been entered in their proper place.

Finally, as Dr. Stewart's last bequest to the Church of Christ, we have the present volume of his Croall lectures. The lectures were delivered on six successive Sunday evenings, in the months of February and March 1902, in St. Andrew's Church, Edinburgh, by appointment of the Croall Lectureship Trustees. The preparation of the lectures for publication was delayed year after year, at first by the pressure of professorial and administrative work, more especially by the exacting work in connection with the new arrangements for the training of teachers, and latterly, as we have seen, by the state of the author's health. The fastidiousness of the scholar and the desire to make the volume more worthy of the Croall Lectureship with its roll of distinguished lecturers no doubt contributed to the delay. In the last two years of his life, however, Principal Stewart was able to expand and thoroughly revise the manuscript, which was left all but ready for the printer. These lectures, now edited with pious care by one who has himself rendered conspicuous service to the Church, are but the earnest of still more important contributions, which, had he been spared to us, Dr. Stewart was capable of making to the literature of 'the queen of sciences.'

#### VIII. CONCLUSION

In bringing to a close this brief record of Principal Stewart's manifold activities as teacher, administrator, and churchman, the writer asks himself what were the more outstanding features of his character, as viewed from the standpoint of a thirty years' friendship and association in common work.

Even those who met the Principal for the first time must have been struck by his dignified courtesy. If at times he appeared unduly reserved, this was due for the most part to his innate modesty. Yet beneath the modest exterior lay a quiet strength of character with which, perhaps, he was not always credited. That Stewart, when scarcely more than a boy, should leave his home to seek his fortune unaided and alone at a distant University implies no small amount of determination and strength of purpose. Dr. Boyd spoke the truth when, in his *Twenty-five Years in St. Andrews*, he referred to his 'old friend, Alexander Stewart, now D.D.,' as having 'risen through his own merit, and nothing else, just as high as he can rise in our unhierarchical Kirk.'

Principal Stewart, in the writer's opinion, was seen at his best in his happy family circle. No man ever had a wife more devoted to her husband's interests and welfare, or children more 'lovingly affectioned' towards their father. In his home, or in the congenial company of friends, both sparkle and humour marked his talk, for he 'wore his learning lightly as a flower,' and possessed a rich fund of entertaining anecdote. As was said of him at the time of his death, 'in social intercourse the qualities most noticeable were urbanity, kindness, tranquillity, and goodwill . . . and the genial gleam of seasonable humour.'

Above all things Principal Stewart was a scholar, and a man of highly cultivated mind. In the words of the well-informed writer of the obituary notice in the *Scotsman*, 'he had not the rapier-like mind and the brilliant wit of Cunningham, nor the elemental force and the vigorous grasp of Tulloch; but he had more learning than either, and also more of such advantages as may follow from the possession of a severely disciplined intellect.' His mind

was a storehouse of the most varied knowledge, for he was a reader of encyclopædic range. Unlike most omnivorous readers, however, Dr. Stewart, in addition to a retentive memory, possessed the faculty of, so to say, pigeon-holing the results of his reading so that they were at once available when required. Akin to this faculty was his love for neatness and order; a more efficient clip, or a new device for filing loose papers, was as eagerly seized upon as a new plant by an enthusiastic botanist.

In questions of academic and ecclesiastical policy Principal Stewart stood for honesty and straightforwardness; a tortuous policy was to him anathema. He was loyal in his friendships and tolerant towards those who differed from him. He obeyed at all times the apostolic injunction to 'seek peace and ensue it.' Nor should his love for St. Andrews be forgotten. The grey memory-haunted city early cast her spell over Stewart, as over so many others, strangers like him within her gates. St. Mary's and St. Andrews—college, university, and city—were alike dear to him.

Principal Stewart, finally, was a man of sincere and unobtrusive piety. As to his theological position, he was, in the words of a competent judge (Sir Wm. Robertson Nicoll), 'a Liberal Evangelical, with the stress on the second word.' The central message of the Creeds was for him 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.'

Professor Allan Menzies had undertaken to write this prefatory memoir to the Croall Lectures when he too was suddenly taken from us. It is fitting, therefore, that a place should be found here for the concluding part of the beautiful tribute which he paid to his former colleague and lifelong friend in *College Echoes* (29th October 1915): 'He was the kindest of colleagues, and he made an admirable

Principal. In spite of a certain brusqueness of address, his students had great confidence in him, and never doubted that he cared for them and did them all the good in his power. They testified the warm regard in which they held him on several occasions. . . . He firmly upheld the discipline of the College, and at the same time he was very accessible, and no one applied to him in vain for his advice in any difficulty.

‘ His friends regretted that he was so immersed in University and Church business that he could not do justice to himself by a greater measure of theological authorship. What he did produce made their regret the keener. In quality we have much from him, if not in quantity. His little manual of *Christian Evidences* is an admirable statement of a very difficult subject, and shows how adequate he was to the duties of a Chair, which, as Professor Kay lately wrote to me, is the most difficult Chair in the University. He does not stand before us in that book as one who professes to know the truth, but rather as a seeker for truth, who believes that if he trusts in God and does not depart from goodness, he will be guided to the truth.

‘ The same attitude of mind appears in his closing address as Moderator of the General Assembly of 1911, in which he chose for his theme “ The Religious Use of the Imagination,” and sketched a *modus vivendi* between science and religion. His Croall lectures on “ Creeds and Churches : Studies in Symbolics,” delivered in 1901-2, were left by him in a state for publication, and will appear ere long. On this work his reputation as a theologian will mainly rest. We need not wait for it to recognise in him a gentle, brave, and deeply truth-loving spirit.’

A. R. S. K.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. CHRISTIAN THOUGHT : ITS SOURCES

CHRISTIAN thought may be compared to a mighty river, which, emerging from its hidden fountain among the hills, pursues a course marked by many devious wanderings and curious vicissitudes ere it mingles its waters with the sea. With volume swelled by many contributory rills, now advancing, now seemingly at rest ; at one time pouring through rocky defiles, at another stealing through peaceful meadows ; here sweeping past great cities, there beneath the shadows of lonely forests ; dividing, uniting—its branches sometimes lost in the sand, sometimes rivalling the main stream in magnitude and importance—the river is a fitting image of human life, and especially of the great movements of human thought.

Among great movements of human thought none is so interesting as that which had its rise in ‘ those holy fields, over whose acres walk’d those blessed feet, which nineteen hundred years ago were nail’d, for our advantage, on the bitter cross.’ No doubt many diverse elements had gone to its formation even then. We are only now beginning to understand, through the daily increasing mass of Baby-

lonian, Assyrian, and Egyptian monuments, the forces that were at work in the Eastern world which surrounded the cradle of Christianity. These forces had been influencing Jewish thought, whether by infusion or by antagonism. Waves of conquest could not pass over Palestine—bands of exiles could not go forth and return—intercourse, commercial and other, could not be maintained with brethren in Alexandria, Babylon, and other great centres, without profoundly modifying Jewish ideas. It is difficult to apportion the manifold debt incurred. But this may be asserted. As in earlier centuries the great traditions of the Jewish race, and still more the influence of the great prophets, had imparted and maintained the distinctive national character of the core of Jewish thought however much its form or detail may have been modified, so when Christian thought appears first upon the great background of the Roman Empire, its main constituent, its controlling force, is the impulse it had received from Christ and His Apostles, the revelation of God which had come to man through them. No doubt—to go back to the first-used figure—as a river brings down, from its upper reaches to its lower, traces of the rocks and soil through which it has passed, much that was Jewish clung to early Christianity. So again, when Christianity had entered the wide arena of Greek and Roman life, it proceeded to absorb much of the philosophy and other elements of culture which there held sway. One of the axioms of an influ-



ential school of theology in our day is that 'Dogma in its conception and development is a work of the Greek spirit on the soil of the Gospel.'<sup>1</sup> How, it is asked, are we to explain the difference of both form and content between the Sermon on the Mount and the Nicene Creed?<sup>2</sup> The change, it is argued, is equivalent to a change in the centre of gravity in the Christian religion, from conduct to belief, and it is pointed out that it is coincident with the transference of Christianity from a Semitic to a Greek soil. The Sermon on the Mount 'belongs to a world of Syrian peasants,' the Creed 'to a world of Greek philosophers.' On the other hand, however, it has been said that to contrast the Sermon on the Mount with the Creed is to mistake. 'They ought rather to be compared as the description and the analysis of the same river of the water of life flowing on from age to age, an inexhaustible, refreshing stream freely offered to the thirsty souls of men.'<sup>3</sup> This, however, is no place to discuss the evidence for that definition of Christian dogma, and still less to criticise the inferences drawn from it. The contention itself may nevertheless be so far conceded—Christianity entered upon its triumphant career clothed in the raiment and speaking the language of the Hebrew, but it soon learned to assimilate and use for its own purposes the products of the Greek mind. On the one hand, it was impossible for it to exist as spirit without form, as a soul without a body—

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Dogma*, i. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>3</sup> Burn, *Introduction*, p. 7.

Divine revelation has always had its instruments and occasions, its shapes and language. On the other hand, it was only through reasoned statements of the diverse forms in which it thus appeared that its true nature could be made manifest. In itself it is neither Hebrew nor Greek, though it can speak with the tongue either of the Hebrew prophet or the Greek philosopher. It is neither the one nor the other, for it is above both, and can be distinguished from both, even as it is its boast to-day that it is universally applicable to all sorts and conditions of men, and all stages of social development ; it allies itself with the culture and civilisation of the East as well as of the West, purifying and elevating all, identifying itself with none. We understand best what Christianity is in itself when we compare its various manifestations with one another.

There is one point in connection with the earliest stage of Christian thought which is of importance for our present undertaking, but which is not perhaps as yet generally understood. We are too apt to think of the doctrinal development as linked on directly to the stage reached in the New Testament, as if men with the Canon of Scripture in their hands, and deriving all their theological thought from it and it alone, proceeded to expound and formulate it. So far from this, a great part of the mental furniture of the most profound and learned theological thinkers and teachers was derived from quite other sources. While they went to Scripture to correct or confirm the views they had received

Christian doctrine not a direct deduction from Scripture.

or been led to form, this was done necessarily in imperfect fashion, and the result is seen in the many shades of opinion and teaching which prevailed among them. From similar causes the same result is seen amongst ourselves. I cannot state this point better than in the words of Principal Fairbairn : ‘ Ecclesiastical development,’ he observes, ‘ especially as concerns thought or doctrine, does not begin at the point where the New Testament leaves us, but, as it were, behind and outside it—from tradition, the oral Gospel, the narration and exposition, often inadequate and ill-understood, of the wandering prophet.’<sup>1</sup> Again, ‘ since the men who received the tradition mostly differed in tongue, mind, ancestry, moral and religious inheritance, from the men who delivered it, the change of hands could not but involve some change of meaning. . . . We may say, then, that the thought of the ancient Church starts rather from the vulgar than from the Apostolic mind, and, so far as it can be placed in relation to the latter, is rather a mirror of difference than a point in a line of continuous development.’

The doctrinal development, whether continuous or not in the beginning, ran afterwards by no means smoothly. We have periods of furious controversy, times when heresy raised its head and threatened to make shipwreck of the faith ; we have periods of stagnation, of backsliding, of error, of hypocrisy and scepticism ; we have the efforts of individuals, the organisation of communities ; the fiery zeal of

Doctrinal  
development  
not always  
peaceful or  
continuous.

<sup>1</sup> *Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 58.

the persecuting enthusiast, the exaltation of the mystic, the keen criticism of the rationalist—each and all have left their mark on the progress of Christian thought and contributed to make it what we find it to-day.

## II. THE RELATION OF CHRISTIAN THOUGHT TO CHRISTIAN LIFE

It must, however, be remembered that thought is not the only outcome and expression of the living impulse which came with the advent of Christianity. It is a commonplace that Christianity is primarily a life rather than a doctrine, that it appears in feeling and experience before it is moulded by reflection into intellectual forms, that practice goes before theory. Not that the transition from life to thought—to observation of the effects of the power which life exerts, and to reflection upon such observation—is illegitimate. On the contrary, the same Saviour is the Truth as well as the Life, and the life becomes the light of men. But this life which wells up in Christianity finds, as we have said, other outlets of expression besides those which thought and language supply. There are ranges of feeling which tongue cannot utter nor propositions formulate, which, expressed in worship, in adoration, by attitude and act, touch the soul with the thrill of a mystical communion. The active side of the religious nature finds its satisfaction in the organisation of an institution, in the Church with its manifold functions and labours, and in the moral

life with its ideals, its struggles, its failures and its victories. Christ does not call the mind alone into His service, but all sides of man's complex nature, which He illumines with His truth, and stirs with the breath of His divine life. There are those who would set one of these manifestations against the others, or even set against all of them that power of spiritual life in which, as we have seen, they have their common root. This is no doubt the principal thing: without this, thought, institution, moral life are vain and empty. It is the life that gives its value to the doctrine: but it may be safely said, that without the translation of the life into intellectual form the life itself could not endure.<sup>1</sup> Because doctrines have so often sur-

Can the life endure without formulated doctrine?

vived the life which once gave them power, and endured, like the husk without a kernel, men have thought that life might be transmissible apart from doctrine, that is, without being translated into intellectual form. Certainly, we must acknowledge the power of that indefinite spiritual atmosphere which we sometimes speak of as the *Time-Spirit*, of which like the wind we feel the effects, but cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. Yet we must be sensible that even greater power may be embodied in ideas which come red-hot from the fires of a human experience which has been kindled as by a divine flame. It is to such ideas animating the heroes of thought and action that the movements are due by which the nations have been led on in

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B.

the path of progress, and the face of the world has been transfigured. It has been argued that, of the two, thought is even more permanent than action; the results of action may pass away, great thoughts are a perennial possession. The late Professor Max Müller in his *Autobiography* remarks: 'Much as I admired Ruskin when I saw him with his spade and wheelbarrow, encouraging and helping his undergraduate friends to make a new road from one village to another, I never myself took to digging and shovelling and carting. Nor could I quite agree with him, happy as I always felt in listening to him, when he said: "What we think or what we know, or what we believe, is in the end of little consequence. The only thing of consequence is what we do." My view of life has always been the very opposite. What we do, or what we build up, has always seemed to me of little consequence. Even Nineveh is now a mere desert of sand, and Ruskin's new road also has long since been worn away. The only thing of consequence to my mind is what we think, what we know, what we believe.' It is easy to perceive and criticise the onesidedness of this declaration, but it is at least a side which needs sometimes to be emphasised.

### III. CHRISTIAN THOUGHT HAS VARIOUS DEGREES OF DEVELOPMENT

If, therefore, Christian thought is one of several forms in which the living power of Christianity ex-

presses itself, it is necessary to remark still further that this thought itself has various forms and degrees of development. At the foundation of all lie the elementary facts and perceptions which constitute the material of our religious experience, either apprehended by us directly and personally, or the result of instruction and training—either comprehended at once as simple and obvious, or made intelligible by means of images and symbols, as when ‘Our Father’ stands in our minds for the highest that we know of God. On the basis of these experiences there arises a twofold structure according as the development takes place in the individual mind, or in the mind of the community. In the first case the judgments that are formed may rest at the stage of opinion, or may pass into firmly held beliefs or convictions. Opinions are often hastily formed and loosely held, valid only for the individual and without general evidential force. Belief, Conviction, Faith, implies clearer insight and firmer appropriation. Opinion may simply indicate the balance of judgment in favour of one of two competing conceptions ; Belief implies that we are prepared to act on the conclusion to which we have come, and even to make sacrifices on its behalf.

In the individual—  
Opinions and Beliefs.

The judgments involved in either Opinion or Belief may be uttered in language and embodied in a proposition. They must be so, if they are to be of use to others, and pass beyond the sphere of individual thought into that of the community. Hence arises Teaching, *Doctrine*, as such communi-

In the community—Doctrines and Dogmas.

cated knowledge is properly called. Doctrines, and, still more, Dogmas, imply more than the mere description or summarising of religious facts and experiences. They imply something of a theory or explanation of them. Of these two terms, Doctrine is of wider significance than Dogma: a doctrine is less formal, less of a scientific construction than a dogma, and there is implied in the latter a reference to some religious community on whose authority it is maintained.

You look at a beautiful picture, you are sensible of the impression which it makes upon you. You proceed to analyse that impression in order that you may make it clearer to yourself, and be able to communicate it to others. Such an analysis makes it possible to retain the fleeting impression as a permanent possession. At the same time, it reveals to you the principle on which this and all similar works of art are constructed: and you are thenceforth able more intelligently to enjoy and, it may be, criticise them. Classifying and generalising these principles, you finally arrive at a Science of Aesthetics. After the same analogy we may say that the contemplation and analysis of religion, of Christian facts and experiences, enable us to ascertain the principles and laws which they exemplify. These we term Doctrines or Dogmas, and when these are arranged and placed in due relation and proportion they lead us to the Science of Dogmatic or Systematic Theology. The element of experience, it will be observed, is primary and indispensable.

Doctrines systematised form Systematic Theology.



Without pictures, statues, buildings, poems, musical compositions, there could be no arts of Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Poetry, Music, and still less could there be any Science of Aesthetics. So a doctrine which corresponds to nothing in the living experience of the Christian, like a theory which rests on no basis of fact, is only an empty phrase.<sup>1</sup> But Painting and Music, as we know, have their different schools, which are distinguished by their respective methods and canons of artistic criticism. When these are formulated and are acknowledged by the adherents of the various schools, we have in each case something analogous to what we mean by a Creed. Each statement would differ from the general science of Aesthetics just on account of its relation to a special school of Art. It would command the allegiance of those who belonged to the school: it would go forth with the authority of its leaders: it would have direct reference to practice, and it would be as clear and succinct as possible. Within the limits of the school it would be the final expression of artistic faith. So Creeds are the Documents, of a more or less official character, in which the Christian Church, or the various branches of it, have set down, as they have understood them, the facts and principles which they regarded as most fundamental, as lying at the root of their common religious life. From a somewhat different point of view, Creeds may be said to correspond with the constitutions, treaties, declarations, which count for

Creeds are formulations by different doctrinal 'schools.'

General definition of a Creed.

<sup>1</sup> Bovon, *Dogmatique*, i. 29.

so much in the civil life of the State. These are designed to regulate the life of the State, and to them we refer when we wish to understand the inmost nature of the State, the sources and ideals, in obedience to which it moves. The Creed, as we shall more clearly see at a later stage, is at once the Claim of Right, the Treaty of Peace, the Manifesto of the Church, or of the section of the Church, from which it has emanated.

#### IV. CHRISTIANITY THE FIRST RELIGION TO RECOGNISE FULLY THE CLAIM OF REASON TO BE SATISFIED

Earlier non-Christian Religions.

It is an observation of Leibniz, quoted with approval by Dr. Swainson in his elaborate and valuable work on the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds, that 'the nations which filled the earth before the establishment of Christianity had ceremonies of devotion, sacrifices, libations, and priesthods, but they had no articles of faith, no dogmatic theology. They were never taught whether the objects of their adoration were true personal beings, or merely personifications of the wondrous powers of nature: even their mysteries consisted only in the performance of certain rites and practices, and were not accompanied by the delivery and acceptance of any dogma.' It seems to me that this statement is only relatively true. If it implies that in the ancient religions there was not a considerable didactic element, it is not justified by facts. Greek mythological religion was undermined by the scepticism

of the philosophers, but where there is scepticism there must have been its opposite—faith. Then in India, to go no further, though the intellectual element was developed rather as philosophy than as religion, yet the philosophy was religious, and stood in the place of a dogmatic explanation of the religion. It is true, however, that the pagan religions which grew up with the peoples and races among whom they are found were based upon custom rather than belief. The religion being coextensive with the nation, there was no need and no room for a profession of faith. The narratives concerning the gods are vague; the ideas which they awaken, crude; speculation and inquiry, generally non-existent. Not belief, but conformity with the prescribed customs was the test of belonging to a religious community. In respect of thought and knowledge they walked as men walk in the haze which precedes the dawn. Undoubtedly Christianity was the first religion which ventured to do justice to reason as well as to conscience. Reason in alliance with Christianity sought and seeks to be brought face to face with the realities of existence, to comprehend how religion is made the source, the stimulus, the guide of moral life. In Christianity the intellectual side of man's nature emerges into greater prominence, its importance is recognised, its needs are more carefully provided for. It is not that other parts of his complicated nature are ignored, it is not that intelligence is cultivated apart from the emotional and the practical, but it is seen

Christianity  
and our intel-  
lectual side.

A Creed compared to a map, etc.

that the search for truth is emphatically the business of Christian thinkers. And of all forms of Christian thought, the Creed, as we have seen, is the most concentrated and significant. Whether it is as some one defined a proverb—‘the wit of one man and the wisdom of many’—or the resultant of a multitude of forces and an age-long growth, it not only deserves but commands attention. In this intellectual aspect a Creed has been compared to a map. ‘We may know our way about a district fairly well, and not be able to draw a map of it. Yet, with a map, how much more definite will be the advice which we can offer to wayfarers. A theological creed is like a map, a survey of a certain region of thought drawn with a sense of proportion.’<sup>1</sup> Again, Sir W. Hamilton’s illustration of the service rendered by language to thought has been applied to Creeds. ‘A country,’ he says, ‘may be overrun by an armed host, but it is only conquered by the establishment of fortresses. Words are the fortresses of thought. They enable us to realise our dominion over what we have already overrun in thought: and to make every intellectual conquest the basis of operation for others still beyond.’<sup>2</sup> By a Creed we comprehend and hold the region of our theological thought. Or still another striking illustration may be given of the place which Creeds hold in relation to the general system of Christian

<sup>1</sup> Burn, *Introduction*, p. 288.

<sup>2</sup> Sir W. Hamilton, *Logic*, i. 138, quoted in Green, *The Christian Creed*, p. 161.

thought. 'The Creed is not a coloured lens which the Church uses to enable her to look at the mid-day sun of Scripture, nor a paltry candle which she lights in order to make the Scripture more luminous, it is a concave mirror in the focus of which she concentrates the rays of the sun in order to reflect them upon herself and upon the world.'<sup>1</sup>

#### V. A SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY AND A CREED ARE NOT NECESSARILY COEXTENSIVE

It is the ideal aim of Systematic Theology to present the whole circle of religious truth, with all its facts and phenomena, drawn from every possible source—from nature, history, Scripture, the mind and environment of man, and the revelation of God—omitting nothing, arranging all in due relation and proportion, correctly analysing, classifying, interpreting the facts perceived, and drawing the appropriate inferences from them. If we thus possessed a complete, comprehensive, accurate delineation of the whole field, in every point of which every one who was duly instructed could unhesitatingly acquiesce, the perfect Systematic Theology and the perfect Creed would coincide. There would not be a proposition in the former which might not be included in the latter. But because such perfection of treatment is not attainable, the Church has generally left to individual enterprise the endeavour after even an approximation to this ideal.

<sup>1</sup> Chaponnière, *La Question des Confessions de Foi*, 1867, ii. 60, 66.

The aim of a Systematic Theology is completeness.

A Creed has a practical ecclesiastical aim.

A Creed is authoritative.

The theologian aims at exhibiting the whole range of Christian Doctrine as held by the Church to which he belongs, or in the form which most commends itself to his own mind. Whatever the knowledge or skill which he brings to his task, even though he attains a relative success, imperfection, a tentative character, necessarily belongs to all such efforts. The aim of the Church in formulating a Creed is in a sense less ambitious and is pre-eminently practical. Her aim is to secure the allegiance of her people. The document springing out of such a need is not necessarily comprehensive or exhaustive. It may not include more than the points on which allegiance has been shaken. It does not seek to say more than is necessary. Compared with the elaborations of Systematic Theology, it is *brief, authoritative, objective*. Its *brevity* is often a mark of its antiquity, since definitions tend to multiply and become more elaborate as thought is developed and controversies become more acute. A Creed is *authoritative*: in so far as its subject-matter extends, it has passed the tentative stage, and represents that on which the religious community has made up its mind. This is not, as we shall see afterwards, to preclude revision, should occasion for revision be shown, but it denotes a relative finality—if the expression may be allowed; the Creed goes forth with authority to all who acknowledge the authority of the Church or community from which it proceeds. It is *objective*, in so far as sentiment, bias, even opinion, that which belongs to the

individual rather than the common life, are carefully eliminated, and what are believed to be indubitable facts are alone set down. It is easily seen how important the study of such documents is for the advancement of Systematic Theology. The aim of the latter being, as we have seen, the presentation of the full orbéd truth, it is of enormous advantage not to be dependent on the imperfect records of the history of Christian thought, so often fluctuating and obscure, but to have, as it were, knots upon the thread of that history, points where it has focussed itself, and been formulated in definite statements, which may indeed be misinterpreted, but are as reliable indications of its course as in the nature of things it is possible for us to have.

#### VI. VARIOUS ANCIENT DESIGNATIONS OF CREEDS

The documents whose relation to the course of Christian thought we have thus generally described, we have spoken of with equal generality as *Creeds*. This is, however, not the only name by which they are known, and some would restrict the application of this term to the declarations of Faith of the ancient Church. No other title, however, except perhaps Symbol, is so suited for use in a general sense, and it is of course the most familiar of all. *Creed* is simply the Latin word *Credo*, 'I believe,' which is the opening word of the Apostles' Creed, and of the Nicene Creed in its Latin or Western

Creed—origin  
of the term.

version.<sup>1</sup> Other ancient names were the Faith, the Teaching, the Rule of Faith, the Rule of the Truth, the Apostolic Preaching or Tradition, Summary or Exposition. Dr. Swainson thinks<sup>2</sup> that a distinction ought to be drawn between the 'Symbol' or baptismal Creed and 'the Rule of Faith,' the latter being an expansion of the former, and more for the guidance of the teachers and fully instructed members of the Church. But the usage of Isidore in the seventh century, quoted by Dr. Swainson as an early authority, would scarcely outweigh that of Augustine, who, a century earlier, distinctly says: 'Receive, children, the Rule of Faith, which is called the Symbol.'

The term  
*Symbol*—its  
origin.

The history of the term Symbol is more obscure, and it is complicated, as we shall see in the following chapter, by the legend of the origin of the Apostles' Creed, which is only explicable through a somewhat mistaken derivation of Symbol.

There were two ancient practices from either of which the term may be derived, if indeed it was not used with a conscious reference to both. The word means first a 'Token' or 'Mark,' and may be traced to the *tessera hospitalitatis*,<sup>3</sup> 'an earthenware token, which two friends divided and passed on to their descendants, making the duty of friendship hereditary.' Thus Tertullian speaks of such a doctrinal formula being used as a *tessera*: it was the badge of Christian membership, admitting him who

<sup>1</sup> Lumby, *Creeds*, p. 2, note; Heurtley, *History*, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Swainson, *Creeds*, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Burn, *Introduction*, p. 282.



presented it to the fellowship and to the social meal in churches where he was a stranger. A similar use for purposes of identification underlies the other signification of the word—a pass or permit. Just as in the darkness of the night the soldier gave the password to the sentry to prove that he was a friend and not an enemy, so the possession and knowledge of the Creed was an assurance to the churches of other cities and countries that the man was, as he professed to be, a Christian believer, and not an intruder or a spy. This is the explanation, or one of the explanations, given by Rufinus, a writer of the fourth century. Either of these uses of the Creed was analogous to the signs or tokens<sup>1</sup> by which those who were entitled to be present at the heathen mysteries were distinguished from others—baptism being the rite of initiation into the Christian mysteries, and the Creed being communicated to the candidates for baptism.

It is evident that such uses could not have been made of the Creed, unless it had been guarded with the jealousy with which the password of an army, or a token of hereditary rights of hospitality, would be preserved. Abundant evidence that such was the case is to be found in the early writers.<sup>2</sup> To take one typical instance—Sozomen, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, in connection with his account of the Council of Nicaea, tells how he had been dis-

The Creed was originally a secret symbol.

<sup>1</sup> Heurtley, *History*, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Lumby, *Creeds*, pp. 2-11; Heurtley, *History*, p. 7; Burn, *Introduction*, pp. 281-2.

suaded by his friends from inserting the Creed, as he had intended, because it would thus be brought to the knowledge of unbelievers. 'These things,' he says, 'only the initiated must speak and hear.' It is clear how greatly the difficulty of tracing the history of the ancient Creeds has been increased by the secrecy thus observed.

By the fourth century the use of the term *Symbolum* was established in the West.<sup>1</sup> Thenceforth Creeds are usually known as Symbols or Symbolical Documents, and the study of them is now commonly entitled Symbolics or Symbolical Theology.

Post-Reformation  
designations—  
A Confession,  
Articles.

After the Reformation in the sixteenth century, the various Churches drew up statements of their belief to which the name of *Confession* was generally given. In important respects, as we shall have occasion to see hereafter, the Confessions differed from the ancient Symbols, chiefly, perhaps, in their obvious comprehensiveness and elaboration. Among such Confessions is the great Westminster Confession, which forms the chief among the standards of the Church of Scotland and other Presbyterian Churches. The *Articles* of the Church of England fulfil the same function in regard to the doctrinal position of that Church.<sup>2</sup>

#### VII. THE FIRST BEGINNINGS OF CREEDS

Turning now to what we may call the beginning of Creed formation, we find the germ, but, it is

<sup>1</sup> Burn, *Introduction*, p. 285.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A.

important to notice, no more than the germ, of such a movement in Scripture. There is what may properly be called a Creed element, but not even the incipient stage of the Creeds themselves. Leibniz, in the passage to which allusion has already been made, claims that the people of Israel had a distinct creed, and that Christianity has inherited this peculiarity from the Jewish nation. Undoubtedly the Jews had beliefs: there are individual confessions here and there in the Old Testament, and the formula, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord,'<sup>1</sup> may be compared with the Kalimah or Creed of the Mohammedan—'There is no God but God, and Mohammed is the prophet of God'; but in character and use none of these amounts to what we understand by a Creed. In the New Testament there are indications of a generally received outline of teaching which formed the basis of the preaching of the Apostles, and of the instruction given to their converts.<sup>2</sup> Confession of the Lord Jesus, 'that Jesus is Lord,' was certainly exacted from those about to be baptized. We have personal utterances such as the avowal of Nathanael, the confession of Peter, the profession of faith suggested to the gaoler at Philippi; or such summaries of doctrinal import as 'The mystery of Godliness,' in the First Epistle to Timothy, and the enumeration of first principles found in the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. These last, however, are

Germs of  
Creeds in the  
New Testa-  
ment.

<sup>1</sup> A. S. Geden, *Studies in Comparative Religion*, 1898, p. 263.

<sup>2</sup> Burn, *Introduction*, p. 8.

generally regarded as having formed part of primitive hymns rather than of primitive Creeds. St. Paul speaks of the 'form of doctrine which was delivered you'<sup>1</sup>—he writes to Timothy of the good 'confession' which he had 'confessed' (probably at his baptism) 'before many witnesses';<sup>2</sup> and again he bids him 'to hold fast the form of sound words,' the 'good deposit.'<sup>3</sup> He claims indeed to have had a dispensation or deposit of truth committed to him and to be the steward of the divine mysteries.<sup>4</sup> St. Jude speaks of 'the faith once delivered to the saints,'<sup>5</sup> and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, of the 'first principles of the oracles of God,'<sup>6</sup> while St. John speaks of a doctrine which if any came bringing it not, he was not to be received or encouraged.<sup>7</sup> It is, however, in the baptismal formula at the close of the Gospel according to St. Matthew that we find not only the germ but the ground-plan of almost all pre-Reformation Creeds. The authenticity of the passage has been questioned—as what has not been questioned in our days?—but so far without effect. It is true that baptism possibly took place 'in the name of Christ,' simply, that is, on confession of the Lordship of Jesus, but there is an unbroken traditional use of the trinitarian formula from the earliest times.

St. Matthew  
xxviii. 19, the  
ground-plan of  
almost all  
ancient Creeds.

<sup>1</sup> Romans vi. 17.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Timothy vi. 12, R.V.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Timothy i. 13-14, R.V., margin.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Corinthians iv. 1, ix. 17; Ephesians iii. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Jude 3.

<sup>6</sup> Hebrews v. 12.

<sup>7</sup> 2 John 10.

The secrecy which surrounded the confessional formulas of the ancient Church, and no doubt the wholesale destruction of books which marked many of the persecutions, have brought it about that, as a modern investigator remarks, 'the earliest forms of complete Church creeds which we can identify with certainty are only found in writings of the fourth century, when Christianity became a "permitted religion" and Christian books were brought out freely to the light of day.'<sup>1</sup> When we pass from 'the testimony of individual writers to the acknowledged Creed of a Church,' he further observes, 'it is easy to strain the evidence and compile, by a too arbitrary critical process, a creed of Antioch gleaned from Ignatius, or a creed of Ephesus from Justin Martyr, or a creed of Gaul from Irenaeus.' When we study the evolution of the Creeds as a purely literary or historical process, it is constantly necessary to be on our guard against such overstraining; but if our object be primarily to trace the substance rather than the forms, and to discover how far the later Creeds formulated the faith which was already held by an earlier age, the testimony of such writers affords much helpful guidance. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, suffered martyrdom about the year 117. His teaching has been characterised as 'a theology wonderfully mature in spite of its immaturity.' He expressed himself in regard to the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ in terms which may well be taken as anticipating later

Earliest completely formulated Church Creeds belong to the fourth century.

Ignatius of Antioch.

<sup>1</sup> Burn, *Introduction*, p. 38.

Justin Martyr. developments. Justin Martyr [died c. 167] refers to the instruction given to candidates for baptism,<sup>1</sup> and presents in his writings many parallels to the Apostles' Creed—but 'the variety of context in which these are found is an argument against the supposition that he professed one such form in a

Irenaeus. Baptismal Creed.' Irenaeus was born in Asia Minor, but his life was spent in Gaul, where he became bishop of Lyons [c. 178]. 'The rule of faith which he teaches is not unlike that of Justin Martyr, but it is more complete.'<sup>2</sup> The writings of Tertullian [c. 200] form the transition from the indications found in the writings of Irenaeus and Justin to the regularly developed Creed which meets us in the writings of the fourth century. There can be no doubt that Tertullian refers to, though he does not quote, a definitely existing formulary. From him we may infer the beliefs, though not in formal guise, of the African Church, as we learn those of Alexandria from Origen [d. 254] and Gregory Thaumaturgus<sup>3</sup> [d. 270], and those of Antioch through Lucian the Martyr [d. 312], whose testimony is preserved by the historian Socrates. In all we perceive a steady preparing of the way for the ancient form of faith which was to constitute the nucleus of what we know as the Apostles' Creed. To the subject of that ancient form of faith we shall return in considering the history of the latter.

<sup>1</sup> Burn, *Introduction*, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> J. R. Leslie, *The Three Creeds*, 1896, p. 12.

VIII. THREE WAYS IN WHICH FORMULATED CREEDS  
MAY HAVE BEEN PRODUCED

There are obviously three ways in which an articulated expression of the Christian faith may arise. First, it may be the result of individual effort. A wise and earnest man draws out a scheme of belief for his own use, or for that of the community to which he belongs. For some reason, as, for example, its length, it is found not to be adapted for use as a Creed, to which comparative brevity is essential, but it remains as it were a standard of the second rank, endowed with the authority derived from the position of its author and the quasi-recognition given to it by the Church. Such is the position occupied by the works of Thomas Aquinas in the Roman Catholic Church or the *Institutes* of Calvin in the Reformed Churches. Or, like the Augsburg Confession, prepared by Melanchthon, it may be placed among the primary symbolic books of the Church to which the author belongs.<sup>1</sup> Or again, the common Creed may have been drafted by an individual before being accepted by the Church, although it may now be impossible to trace the original writer.

Secondly, the document may be the product of joint action on the part of representatives of the

<sup>1</sup> In this connection also it may be noted: The chief doctrinal standards of the Wesleyan Church are Wesley's First Fifty-three Sermons and the Notes on the New Testament. The chief doctrinal standard of the Society of Friends is Barclay's *Apology*, 1676 (Banks, *Manual of Christian Doctrine*, 11th ed., p. 16).—J. M.

Church or of a group of churches, met together in council for this purpose. Typical examples of this method are afforded by the Nicene Creed and the Westminster Confession.

Imperceptible  
growth.

Lastly, the Creed may have grown up, almost imperceptibly, through common usage, receiving accretion or modification in its progress, until it attains what may be regarded as its final form. Of this process the Apostles' Creed is the classical instance.

Of course these three methods are not always mutually exclusive. The second in particular may supervene upon either the first or the third, since a council may adopt an already existing formula as the basis of its deliberations and labours. Or the third method may supervene upon the first, since a formula which bears on it the marks of gradual development in the consciousness of the Church may owe much to individual initiation and guidance.

The number  
of ancient  
Symbolical  
Documents is  
much greater  
than 'the  
three Creeds.'

The number of Symbolical Documents produced in these various ways is very great. 'It may sound strangely perhaps to some,' says Dr. Heurtley, 'that I should speak of various creeds, as though implying that there are many, seeing that they are familiar with but three, and are accustomed to hear them spoken of as "the three Creeds," as though these were all that are known, or, at any rate, all that are recognised. And in truth these are all, for the most part, that so far as use is concerned have survived to this day. But there are still extant a consider-



able number of creeds which were in use in the ancient Church, one in one of its branches, another in another. These, however, were not in strictness different creeds but rather varieties of the one Confession which the Church Catholic has professed from the beginning. The truth is that for some centuries each Church seems to have felt itself at liberty to use its own formulary, and even to make additions or alterations, always provided that it did not in substance depart from the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Hence arose variations in detail in the midst of substantial oneness and harmony. "*In veste varietas non scissura*"—the garment might be of diverse colours, but it had no rent.'<sup>1</sup> Dr. Swainson has pointed out that it is to Dr. Heurtley himself that the modern awakening of British thought to this variety of early creeds is chiefly due. Earlier writers either passed it over in silence, or their notice of it is meagre and inadequate. When Heurtley published in 1858 his *Harmonia Symbolica*, and gave a collation of the more important Creeds which have come down to us from branches of the ancient Western Church, he gave the study of these documents a new impulse and set it on more scientific lines. And no one can look into the collections of Hahn<sup>2</sup> without recognising the immense variety of forms from which the Church had as it were the opportunity of selection, and the consequently complicated character of the

<sup>1</sup> Heurtley, *History*, pp. 14, 15.

<sup>2</sup> August Hahn, *Bibliothek der Symbole und Glaubensregeln*.

Post-Reformation Creeds  
also very  
numerous.

historical problem which is to be faced in any endeavour to arrange this mass of material in true historical order and relation of dependence. Nor is the case very different in the next great creed-producing period which meets us after the Reformation. Partly because the Church was then split up into many sections, partly on account of the numerous attempts which were made here and there to satisfy the need of churches or communities to define their several positions against Rome or in reference to each other, Confessions rapidly multiplied. Not that these, however, were really independent. A very little inquiry and comparison is sufficient to show how largely their authors built upon the work of their predecessors. These Confessions form families in which one can trace affinities and descents. The Westminster Shorter Catechism, for example, grew out of innumerable Catechisms which were in circulation before it. We have something analogous in the Bible itself, which is a growth, an accumulation of writings, in which God revealed Himself at many times and in many ways.

'The survival  
of the fittest.'

We are to look upon the Creeds, then, as examples of growth, of evolution, and in the case of those whose use has come down to our own days, of the survival of the fittest. We are not to think of the various writers as tinkering at them, inserting words here, cutting out words there, until they got the Creeds to their mind. The process of alteration was in many respects an unconscious process, due

to local usage, though the result was often very considerable divergence. Each writer carefully reports the form used in his own Church.

Thus it came to be with Creeds as with languages. Minor differences in language we call dialects ; a greater degree of divergence produces languages ; and languages fall into families, the members of which resemble each other in some degree. Practically no likeness at all is discernible between those belonging to different families. The predominance of one language or of one dialect over another is due, partly to historical circumstances, as when the language of the dominant race prevails, but partly also to natural qualities, when that which is fitted to be most useful survives. So changes have crept into the Creeds, almost unnoticed at first, but retained if they commended themselves to the Christian convictions and sentiments of those who used them ; otherwise they were rejected or fell into disuse. When at length a Creed assumed a stereotyped form, this permanence might be due partly to its general adoption, and partly to the accidental circumstance of its having been included in a liturgy, after which any change became exceedingly difficult. But it was also an indication that the evolution was complete, that with the means at hand in the shape of knowledge, culture, religious experience, no further improvement was possible. For any advance, a new beginning on different lines was an indispensable condition.

The evolution of Creeds is analogous to the evolution of languages.

## IX. NO CREED IS INFALLIBLE

One great lesson to be learned from a general survey of the history of Creeds, is that infallibility cannot be predicated of them. The three ancient Creeds have perhaps owed something of their special authority to their supposed isolation. A closer examination shows them to be three out of many—perhaps the worthiest, certainly the most successful in retaining their hold upon the mind of the Christian Church. No doubt for those who regard the Church as infallible and as having exercised its prerogative in the selection of these Creeds, they hold a position of unassailable authority, but it is needless to say that this is not the Protestant position. ‘All Synods or Councils,’ says the Westminster Confession of Faith, ‘may err, and many have erred; therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice, but to be used only as a help in both.’ The Protestant Confessions have always claimed to be no more than interpretations of the supreme rule of faith and manners, namely the Holy Scriptures.<sup>1</sup> It is one great merit, as we shall see, of the Scots (or Knox’s) Confession of 1560 to have acknowledged this in the most emphatic terms.

Protestant Confessions declare the Scriptures the supreme ‘rule of faith.’

Creeds are necessarily imperfect and incomplete. Compared with the Confessions of the Reformation period, the Creeds of the ancient Church cover but a very small, though a very important, part of the theological domain. Consequently, even should

The ancient Creeds, however authoritative, are incomplete.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C.

their verdicts be regarded as decisive within their own sphere, the ancient Creeds require to be supplemented when new questions arise and demand to be answered. Further, all the Creeds, ancient and modern, in the exposition of the difficulties with which they deal, naturally bring the methods of thought, the philosophical conceptions, and all the elements of culture which belong to their own age. The answers, therefore, that they give require to be modified, or at least expressed differently, to meet the requirements of other times and other lands. They may be too speculative for a time when practical problems absorb attention, or too controversial for a state of mind that desires to make for peace. In order that they may be the interpretation of divine truth which we seek, it may be needful to eliminate from them the elements of bias and prepossession, from which no human work is free. As a work of art is only seen to advantage against a suitable background, so all the circumstances of their production must be borne in mind in order to a right understanding of them. The eye can only see what it brings with it the power of seeing; it is only the educated vision that can perceive the truth arrayed in a different garb from the accustomed one. So with the understanding of Creeds; it must first of all be historical. And when we remember the limitation of human thought in dealing with all that is above and beyond ordinary experience, and that human language itself hampers the expression even of such thought as is attain-

Creeds require historical appreciation in the first place.

able, we see that there will always be something excessive and something defective in any such formulas.

Revision of  
Creeds.

The question of revision and emendation will come before us at a subsequent stage. Here we can only note that there is nothing in the nature and history of Creeds to forbid it; rather everything to encourage it wherever it seems needful and expedient.

What then have we in the Creeds? If not divine utterances, they come to us with the highest human authority, proceeding from or accepted by the mightiest thinkers in ages when the Church absorbed practically the intellectual power and activity of the world. On them generations of devout men have spiritually fed, by them been guided and comforted. They are landmarks in the development of Christian thought. We cannot doubt that like all important events and circumstances they have been subject to the Providence of God, and made subservient to the ends which He has for man. By comparison of them we may reach a higher, purer truth than any one of them contains: together they compose the Creed for man; they show the trend of spiritual aspiration; they reveal even in their imperfections and errors something of the truth which would otherwise have been hidden. In a word, all human things fall short—men, circumstances, events, aims, aspirations, achievements—and yet out of their imperfect strivings will one day come the perfect divine realisation; the apparent discords will blend

Comparative  
study of  
Creeds may  
lead to higher  
truth.

into the higher harmony, and through the mists of human error and corruption will break the brightness of the glory of God. We look not for the miraculous, but we believe in the Providential. It is the voice of Christian optimism which says, 'God's in His heaven; all's right with the world.'

## CHAPTER II

### THE APOSTLES' CREED

IN the last chapter we endeavoured to set forth some of the main features of Creeds and Confessions, such as from the nature of the case we might expect, and as actual history makes known to us. The principles thus explained, it remains now to illustrate in their application to the ancient Creed which is known to us under the name of the Apostles' Creed.

Its terms are probably more or less familiar to us all, though it is not the custom in all Christian Churches to recite it at every church service, as is practically done in the Church of England. It may be well, however, at the outset to recall what its terms are. They run thus :—

Current text. I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth :

And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.



I believe in the Holy Ghost ; The holy catholic church ; The communion of saints ; The forgiveness of sins ; The resurrection of the body ; And the life everlasting. Amen.

#### I. INFLUENCE OF HERESIES ON THE EXPANSION OF CREEDS

One important point in connection with the formation of Creeds, which received a passing reference in the last chapter, but can perhaps be more clearly explained by reference to a concrete instance, is the influence upon them of having to meet antagonistic and heretical positions. They were intended, it is evident, to serve two main purposes—to explain the Faith and to defend the Faith. We are Christians because we believe in Christ. But what does this involve? Obviously that we know who Christ is, that we know about God, about sin, about redemption and all the blessings for this life and the next which are ours if we are Christ's. We must give expression to these views and hopes. To express them makes them clearer to ourselves and enables us to hold them with a firmer grasp. So for our own satisfaction we should probably draw out a statement of what we believe. But there are others who do not share with us these views and hopes ; there are those who differ from us more or less in the way in which they conceive of them, making admissions or omissions which seem to us

The motive of Creeds was to explain and to defend the Faith.

fatal to any real acceptance of the principles of the Christian religion. We have, therefore, not only to express what we believe to be the truth, but to expose error ; and we have to train the young and the ignorant to distinguish between this truth and error. Hence the expression of our Faith tends to grow more elaborate not only as we perceive truth more clearly, but as it becomes necessary to refute or repudiate its opposite. Accordingly all such documents as we are considering bear upon them the marks of battle ; where the defensive works have had the most trouble bestowed upon them, there you may depend upon it the attack has been fiercest and most prolonged. Such opposition has not been altogether an evil, even from the point of view of the progress of the Faith. ‘Opposition,’ it has been wisely said,<sup>1</sup> ‘had a stimulating effect upon the minds of Christian teachers. They picked their words more carefully ; they were led in time to question more thoroughly the validity of their arguments and of their conclusions. This is the good side of all controversy seen in its human aspect. The historian of the Creeds, if he still believes in the Holy Ghost, finds here evidence of His working. In proportion as a Christian theologian in any age does not enter upon controversy with a light heart, seeking less to win advantage over his adversaries than to witness to the truths which are for him “the master light of all his seeing,” he will in all humility gain for himself guidance in dark paths of perilous

<sup>1</sup> Burn, *Introduction*, p. 44.

speculation, and that growth in grace which enables him to win moral influence to stir wills as to move minds.'

We should expect indeed that in the earliest stages of Christianity the expression of Christian belief would be confined to a few simple declarations, and that as difficulties occurred or were suggested, additional explanations would be added. And that is what we find. We have only to look at the Apostles' Creed, and still more the Nicene Creed, to see the evidence of this. Their basis, like that of other ancient Creeds, is obviously the Baptismal Formula. Christ said, 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'<sup>1</sup> That meant that those who were baptized, at the same time declared their faith in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost. This represented the alphabet of Christian teaching, the minimum of knowledge which could be required of those desiring to enter by baptism the membership of the Church of Christ. The Apostles' Creed, which was early used, and long continued to be used, as a Baptismal Creed, falls, it will be noticed, into three parts corresponding with those three vital doctrines of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We still say, 'I believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost'; but in the course of time, as misconceptions arose, it was necessary to introduce further definitions and explanations, until the Creed

Creeds were originally a few simple declarations.

They grew out of the Baptismal Formula.

<sup>1</sup> Matthew xxviii. 19.

Why the second part, concerning the Son, is the longest.

became what we have it now. It is apparent, moreover, that of the three parts into which it may be divided, the second, that concerning the Son, is much the longest. That, no doubt, was partly because faith in Christ was the central and peculiar tenet of the religion which had sprung out of His life and teaching, but also because it was round the doctrine of the Son that the greatest amount of controversy circled in the early centuries. The doctrine of the Father was practically undisputed; that concerning the Spirit, when once the Church's doctrine concerning the Son had been settled, was easily allowed to fall into line. But how the divinity of our Lord was to be held consistently with a full acknowledgment of the unity of God, was for long a matter of the utmost difficulty, and the disputes to which it gave rise are reflected in the structure of the Creeds. Similarly when we come to the Reformation period, when the Churches had to fight as it were for life against the great Church of Rome, and often with each other, Protestant with Reformed, Lutheran with Calvinist, we find in the elaborate Confessions, or rather Manifestoes, which sprang up, the natural outcome of the circumstances which attended their production. It was necessary that points should be explained and defined and guarded against mistake, which in the earlier periods had been taken for granted, and had not forced themselves on the notice of religious men. Many a side issue, as it might earlier have seemed, was found to be of importance because misapprehension

relating to it would lead to dangerous error in regard to the weightiest matters.

## II. IN WHAT SENSE IS THE APOSTLES' CREED APOSTOLIC ?

From what has been said, it will be no matter of surprise that the Apostles' Creed had no direct connection with the apostles, and can only in the vaguest and most general way be held entitled to the name by which it is now known. It is not Scripture, as it would be, could it be proved to have proceeded from apostolic hands. It would be impossible to understand the changes which were made upon it, and its want of recognition in the East, if its apostolic origin had been matter of primitive and general belief. The New Testament, as we saw, has creed germs but no formulated creed. Those germs had to be planted in the soil of the Church's varied life before they could develop into the full-blown formulary. Yet it may be maintained with justice that 'the substance of the teaching' contained in the Creed is 'primitive.'<sup>1</sup> In its simplest and earliest form, as we shall see, it is a very ancient composition handed down by tradition long before it was committed to writing. But only as it may be said to present a brief summary of the apostles' doctrine, laying stress upon the great facts which were the burden of the preaching of a Peter or a Paul, can it be associated with

<sup>1</sup> Burn, *Introduction*, p. 31.

the apostles. It is the Apostles' Creed because it follows in the line of the apostles' teaching, though, no doubt, those who gave it the name meant more than this.

The legend of  
apostolic  
authorship.

The Christians of the first centuries became acquainted with it, as we have seen, when they were under instruction with a view to baptism. It was therefore to them a very sacred thing. By and by it became also invested with the interest of antiquity, and the fact that it was transmitted orally and not in writing prevented any name being associated with its authorship. What wonder that in these circumstances the belief became prevalent, and grew into a tradition, strongly held, that this was a legacy of the first preachers of the Gospel? <sup>1</sup> The tradition which afterwards received the sanction of the Roman Catechism, 1566, is to this day current in the Church of Rome, and her clergy are required to teach it to the people.<sup>2</sup> By the fifth century after Christ the belief had taken a very curious form. A legend had grown up to the effect that on the day of Pentecost, the apostles, before dispersing on their several missions for the conversion of the world, gathered together and agreed upon a common form of belief, that they might carry it as the glad tidings to the remotest ends of the earth. Each, it was said, contributed a clause, and the result was the Apostles' Creed as it was received at the time. There are several versions of the order in which the apostles made their con-

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix D.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix E.

tributions. According to one of the most complete, St. Peter said, 'I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth'; St. Andrew added, 'And in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord'; St. James, 'Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary'; St. John, 'He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried'—and so on to the end, all the twelve taking a part; and though, as we have said, the order varies, in all the versions St. Peter begins and St. Matthias ends the list. From a historical point of view the tradition is worthless. It probably originated, partly at least, in an etymological mistake, the word Symbol which had begun to be applied to the Creed being connected, not with *σύμβολον*, a mark or sign, but with *συμβολή*, which, especially in the plural, signified the contributions which were made to provide a common meal. So the 'Creed was regarded as a collation or epitome of doctrine contributed by the twelve Apostles.' Another explanation of the legend is that, as in its early forms it was possible to distinguish in it twelve parts or Articles, the idea grew up that the Creed should normally consist of the same number of Articles as there had been apostles.<sup>1</sup> As an expression of the reverence in which this summary of Christian doctrine was early held, the legend is valuable and interesting. All ages of the Church have held this Creed in honour; we still do so, but it is clearly desirable that the honour we give

Possible  
origins of the  
legend.

<sup>1</sup> See also Appendix D.

to it should be real and deserved honour, and not the result of a misunderstanding.

It is right, before going further, to observe that the use of Creeds at baptism is not only natural in itself, but has a primitive historical justification. Our Lord's words, already quoted, which furnish the ground-plan of the construction of all ancient Creeds, also indicate the occasion for their employment. And for some centuries this was their chief, almost their exclusive use.<sup>1</sup> The Creed served not only for instruction but also as a password, and was therefore communicated to the candidates for baptism with impressive ceremony. The communication of it was termed the *Traditio Symboli*, the oral delivery of it in order that it might be learned by heart. This was generally accompanied by a sermon or exhortation. Then on a stated day there took place the *Redditio Symboli*, when it was repeated by the catechumens before the bishops and presbyters in the Church. The Symbol or Creed was not necessarily repeated as a whole, but its substance was given in answer to questions.<sup>2</sup>

Traditio Sym-  
boli: Redditio  
Symboli.

### III. THE APOSTLES' CREED PRIOR TO THE END OF THE FOURTH CENTURY

There are two points in the long and interesting history of the Apostles' Creed which, if we fix them

<sup>1</sup> Lumby, *Creeds*, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter iii., 'Baptismal Professions,' of Swainson, *The Nicene and Apostles' Creeds* (Lond., 1875).—J. M.



clearly in our minds, will be a guide and key to the understanding of the rest.

The first is that in the end of the fourth century we find a Creed, differing only in a few particulars from the form in which we now have the Apostles' Creed, which there is reason to think had been in use in Rome and the neighbouring provinces for at least two centuries before. The second is that the Creed, quite in its present form, is first found about the year A.D. 750 in a short treatise on the canonical books by an Abbot and Bishop named Pirminius who laboured in Gaul and Germany.

Two landmarks—  
1. End of fourth century.

2. Middle of eighth century.

The Creed, as it is found in the end of the fourth century, is known as the old Roman Creed and runs as follows :—

(1) I believe in God the Father Almighty :  
 (2) And in Christ Jesus His only Son our Lord.  
 (3) Who was born of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary : (4) Was crucified under Pontius Pilate and buried : (5) On the third day He rose from the dead : (6) Ascended into the heavens : (7) Sitteth on the right hand of the Father : (8) Whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead : (9) And in the Holy Ghost : (10) The Holy Church, (11) The forgiveness of sins, (12) The resurrection of the flesh. Amen.

The old Roman Creed.

This Symbol has formed the subject of a most elaborate investigation by Professor Kattenbusch <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kattenbusch, *Das Apostolicum*. A summary of his views is given by Prof. Kattenbusch in the *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, Oct. 1901, on which [pp. 407-28] the following account is based.

of Giessen. Some of his results, checked at certain points by those of Professor Harnack, the well-known writer upon the early Church, may be indicated at this point.

Traced back  
to 250, pos-  
sibly to  
A.D. 100.

Kattenbusch is of opinion that the old Roman Creed was thrown into shape, out of pre-existing materials, by some unknown author about the year A.D. 100, or possibly even earlier. He infers the unity of authorship from internal evidence, having regard to the form and contents of the Creed. It was written in Greek, public worship at Rome being conducted in Greek, exclusively to A.D. 150, and predominantly to the end of the second century, and the Latin text, though very ancient, bears marks of the process of translation. As to the date, Harnack says that its assignment to a time as early as about 250 'must be regarded as one of the most positive results of historical investigation.'<sup>1</sup> But he himself unhesitatingly traces it 'back to about the middle of the second century.'<sup>2</sup> The chief authorities for the text are an Epistle of Marcellus of Ancyra written about the year 337, and a Psalter, known as that of King Athelstan, belonging to the ninth century.

Whom did it  
counter? Jews.

Who were the opponents in face of whom this standard was raised?

According to Kattenbusch they were Jews, not heathen. There is no trace in it of a repudiation of polytheism, not even the 'I believe in one God' found in some other formulas: there is no trace of

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Apostles' Creed*, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

philosophy, or of the struggle against Gnosticism. Its faith is yet simple, unperverted ; its ideas move on primitive lines. It represents the standpoint of the Acts of the Apostles and bends its chief energies to establishing the Messiahship of Jesus.

Professor Kattenbusch holds that the primitive Church consisted to a far greater extent than is usually recognised of those who had been Jewish proselytes from heathenism. For the heathen who had not passed through this intermediate stage the doctrine of Messiahship would present great difficulties : the 'anointing,' which is literally implied in the terms Messiah and Christ, excited their ridicule, rather than their reverence. Later on, accordingly, the dignity of Jesus was expressed rather through the doctrine of the Logos—the 'Word'—than through that of the Messiah. Then Christ became a proper name, used without consciousness of its original meaning : and this had evidently happened by the time the old Roman Symbol had been rendered from Greek into Latin. But originally the 'Christ Jesus' was the 'Messiah Jesus,' the anointed of God. It was upon this point that the controversy between Jews and Christians turned. If proselytes, the latter had left their heathenism so far behind them that they no longer felt any need to guard against it.

On its positive side, Kattenbusch regards this Creed as a popular declaration of the Pauline view, especially in its Christology. As in the letters of the great apostle, there is no stress laid on the life

It is Pauline in its Christology.

and teaching of Jesus, but only on the great facts by which He was declared to be the Son of God with power. How did the earliest preachers endeavour to bring men over to the faith? The Creed presents us with a summary of their familiar arguments. As Messiah, Jesus is Son of God, and our Lord. He is Son of God, for was He not born of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary? He is our Lord, for though He was crucified and buried, did He not also rise again, and ascend into heaven, where He sits at the right hand of God? Can we doubt, therefore, that as 'Lord' He will come again to judge the quick and the dead, which is the supreme act of Messianic authority? There is something dramatic in the march of events which the Creed thus indicates: scene follows scene with rapidity, but with growing intensity. The instructive contrasts which mark the appearance of the Saviour are brought into view—the humiliation of the Cross, the glory of the throne. Like the flashes from the facets of a precious stone—with the brevity and directness of an inscription cut in stone—these clauses indicate, but no more than indicate, the points they would bring before us. 'The impression which they convey is that of the Son of God who, through ignominy and death, pursued His wondrous way till He reached the place that was rightfully His, the place at the Father's right hand.'

Found in  
Rufinus of  
Aquileia,  
A.D. 390.

This old Roman Creed is found in the writings of Rufinus of Aquileia, who wrote about A.D. 390. The reason why it does not appear in a definite form at

an earlier period was no doubt the secrecy with which, as we have already noticed, the Symbol was guarded as a token of membership. It was transmitted orally, and though such transmission usually leads to variation and addition, we have reason to believe that the Roman Church was especially careful to guard against alteration.

The differences between this and the later form, known to us as the Apostles' Creed, will be readily observed. Words or clauses not found in the earlier form are, 'Maker of heaven and earth,' 'suffered,' 'dead,' 'descended into hell': 'catholic' as applied to the Church, 'communion of saints,' and 'the life everlasting': while, instead of 'conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary,' there occurs the less definite statement, 'born of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary.'

Additions and differences in the Apostles' Creed.

#### IV. THE APOSTLES' CREED AS NOW

The second point in the history to which I referred is that the Creed, quite in its present form, is first found in the works of an Abbot and Bishop named Pirminius, who laboured in Gaul and Germany in the eighth century, and who wrote about the year 750 a short treatise on the canonical books. In this work the Creed is twice given, once in connection with the legend as to its apostolic origin, and once in the form in which it was used at baptism. With the exception of one clause, how-

First found in Pirminius, A.D. c. 750.

Found minus  
one clause and  
two words in  
Caesarius of  
Arles, A.D.  
c. 500.

ever, it is found in a sermon of Caesarius of Arles, about the year 500.<sup>1</sup> From first to last, therefore, the composition of this monument of the Christian faith may be said to have been spread over more than 500 years.

Additions  
made to the  
old Roman  
Creed.

It is impossible here and now to note all the stages in this progress. Suffice it briefly to indicate the order of the chief alterations and additions. Shortly after the time of Rufinus and his great service in committing to writing the old Roman Creed, St. Augustine is found quoting the word 'suffered' before 'under Pontius Pilate.' Fifty years later, 'catholic' was inserted before 'Church.' A hundred years later still, or about the middle of the sixth century, the clause about the conception and birth of Jesus was remodelled, as already noted: the word 'dead' was inserted before 'and buried,' and the phrase 'the communion of saints' appears for the first time. The last addition, made about 650, was 'Maker of heaven and earth,' after 'God the Father Almighty.'<sup>2</sup> Probably it was felt that the first part of the Creed, that referring to the Father, was rather bare as compared with the rest,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'We can now confidently say that the Creed of Caesarius, bishop of Arles (503-43), combined all the additions which we have in mind except 'Maker of heaven and earth,' and in Article 7, 'God Almighty' (A. E. Burn, *The Apostles' Creed*, 1914, p. 45).—J. M.

<sup>2</sup> These five additions, viz. 'suffered,' 'catholic,' 'dead,' 'communion of saints,' 'Maker of heaven and earth,' are all to be found in the Creed of Niceta, the bishop of Remesiana, in modern Servia, Niceta's date being put as early as Rufinus and Augustine. See A. E. Burn, *Niceta of Remesiana* (Camb. Univ. Press, 1905); A. E. Burn, *The Apostles' Creed* (Oxf. Ch. Text-Books), 1914, pp. 41-2.—J. M.

<sup>3</sup> Burn, *Introduction*, pp. 252-5.

and this may have led to the improvement.<sup>1</sup> At Aquileia, c. 390, the words 'invisible and impassible'—the latter word meaning 'incapable of suffering'—occupied this place.<sup>2</sup> They were intended, as Rufinus tells us, 'as a protest against the Patripassian heresy, which, confounding the persons of the Father and the Son, held the Incarnation and whatsoever followed upon it to have taken place in the person of the Father.' As the heresy disappeared, the words not being needed dropped out, with an obvious loss to the balance and rhythm of the several clauses. 'Creator of heaven and earth' was probably introduced from the Eastern Creeds, where it has served to contravene the position of those heretics who denied that the Creator of the world and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ are one and the same.<sup>3</sup> Thus the Creed at length became such that for more than a thousand years it has held its ground as the standing and classic form of this ancient document, remaining practically unchanged notwithstanding the multitude of lips that utter it, and the variety of minds, the peoples and races, which find in it the expression of their deepest religious thoughts.

Has been repeated as it now is for a thousand years.

How did these changes come about? The Roman Church, as we saw, guarded the old Roman Symbol with jealous care. But after its use had spread

The old Roman Creed superseded in Rome for a time.

<sup>1</sup> A. E. Burn, *The Apostles' Creed*, as above, p. 63, regards the clause as anti-Gnostic. Gnostics 'distinguished the Good God of the highest heaven from the Demiurge, or Creator of this world with its pain, and misery, and imperfection.'—J. M.

<sup>2</sup> Heurtley, *History*, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

through neighbouring provinces, circumstances arose which caused its disuse for a time in the city of its origin. Towards the end of the fifth century the western part of the Roman Empire was overrun by the northern barbarians, the Goths and kindred races. The Church set herself to conquer the conquerors, and to a large extent succeeded. Great numbers of them embraced Christianity. But the form in which they preferred it was Arianism, the heresy condemned at the Council of Nicaea, which consisted in the doctrine that Christ was not divine in the same absolute sense in which the Father was divine, though He was the firstborn of all creation, and thus occupied the place, as it were, of a secondary deity. The danger which thus menaced the Church was a real one, and to counteract it, the use of the Nicene Creed, which was specially framed to repel Arianism, superseded the more ancient formula. The latter found a home in Southern Gaul, where it grew and developed, till, when re-introduced into Roman liturgies about the ninth century, it had assumed the form which it has since retained. There might have been difficulties, as Harnack observes, about the acceptance of the 'Frankish symbol as a baptismal one, had it not been recognised as an old acquaintance.'<sup>1</sup> It reminded the people 'of one that was old and once highly honoured.' 'The differences were overlooked or else not regarded as considerable.' And then, too, 'the legend which had encircled the old symbol

The barbarian conquerors accepted Arian Christianity.

The anti-Arian Creed, the Nicene, became more suitable.

The 'Apostles' Creed' was re-introduced from S. Gaul c. ninth century.

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Apostles' Creed*, p. 83.



with a halo of glory awoke again around the new one, and again and for a long time became a power in the Church. Not until the age of the Renaissance and the Reformation was it exploded.'

The rapid adoption of the Creed throughout the Western Church was due in large measure to the prestige and authority of Rome, but also, it has been suggested, to its wide circulation through the Psalters, 'written in great numbers by French scribes in the reign and by the encouragement of Charlemagne.'<sup>1</sup> Its acceptance in the East was at first 'hindered by (1) the circumstance that the Christological section of the Roman symbol came into conflict with a Christological type already established, and by (2) the desire to give fuller expression in the Creed to the higher Christology.'<sup>2</sup> Later, of course, the field was held by the Nicene, which in the Eastern Church is the orthodox Creed.

The Reformers, as a rule, adopted the Apostles' Creed without hesitation, though putting upon it here and there a gloss of their own.

The Westminster Divines printed it at the end of the Shorter Catechism, but inserted in the margin a note explaining that by the clause, 'He descended into hell,' they understood 'continued in the state of the dead, and under the power of death till the third day.' They also appended this general explanation: 'Albeit the substance of the doctrine comprised in the abridgment commonly called the

<sup>1</sup> Heurtley, *History*, p. 16 ; Swainson, *Creeeds*, p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> Harnack, *Apostles' Creed*, p. 49.

Apostles' Creed, be fully set forth in each of the Catechisms, so that there is no necessity of inserting the Creed itself; yet it is here annexed, not as though it were composed by the Apostles, or ought to be deemed canonical Scripture, as the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer (much less a prayer, as ignorant people have been apt to make both it and the Decalogue), but because it is a brief summary of the Christian faith, agreeable to the word of God, and anciently received in the Churches of Christ.' It is printed seven times in the English Book of Common Prayer.

#### V. VARYING INTERPRETATION OF CERTAIN CLAUSES OF THE APOSTLES' CREED

While this Creed, as already remarked, has been in use in a practically unaltered form for more than a thousand years, it must be remembered that a form of words may remain the same and yet the meaning attached to it vary from time to time. The Creed, at least with regard to some of its clauses, has been no exception to this rule. A complete inquiry would therefore embrace not only the history of the document as a whole, but that of every phrase, almost of every word, of which it is composed. A few indications are all that is possible here, and these mainly concern the additions made to the old Roman Creed which find a place in the later and longer form.

The clause, 'He descended into hell,' occurs for the first time as part of an orthodox Creed in that of Aquileia, as reported by Rufinus. It is found, however, in some Arian Creeds of earlier date. That it had no place in the contemporary Roman Creed or in the Churches of the East, Rufinus himself observes. What value it had for the Arians can only be conjectured.<sup>1</sup> Rufinus considers it as a roundabout way of saying 'buried.' But in days when the real humanity of Christ was the subject of debate, it was necessary to account in the Creed not only for the body, which was 'crucified, dead, and buried,' but also for the soul. Hence perhaps the new clause in the Creed to account for the soul of Christ during the three days when He was subject to death. Kattenbusch suggests that it refers to a controversy which was sharply waged in the second century as to whether Christians when they die pass into Hades to the Judgment, or whether believers could assure themselves that Christ had gone thither in order that they should not go. In that case, the article would be a record of the Saviour's triumph not only over death, but over the world to which death is the portal. The clause occurs in the Athanasian Creed but not in the Nicene. By Calvin and others it was understood as signifying the pains suffered by Jesus upon the Cross, while many Protestants refer it to the passage in 1 Peter iii. 19, where our Lord is described as 'preaching to the spirits in prison.' That view has

<sup>1</sup> Heurtley, *Harmonia Symbolica*, p. 134.

been advocated in an elaborate monograph by Professor Clemen of Halle. He finds in it the key to several problems, especially in the department of Eschatology, that is, the section of theology dealing with death, judgment, and eternity, which still agitate the mind of the Church.<sup>1</sup>

'The Holy Ghost.'

If the Creed was originally Pauline, then Part iii. states the blessings attending the 'gift of the Holy Ghost.'

It has been often observed that while the first and second parts of the Creed provide strictly relevant explanations of what is meant by baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son respectively, the third part seems as a whole more loosely related to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. It presents rather a list of the blessings, including the gift of the Holy Spirit, which form together the inheritance of believers.

If indeed the Creed in its most ancient form reflects the theological situation which characterises the Acts of the Apostles, we can understand the allusion to the Holy Ghost as to something well known, experienced not only as a spiritual but as a supernatural power, the source of the speaking

<sup>1</sup> There is difficulty in reconciling this clause with our Lord's words to the penitent malefactor (Luke xxiii. 43): 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.' The difficulty is not got over whether 'hell' is taken to mean 'the state of death' or 'some intermediate state' after death or a place of punishment. Apart from the difficulty referred to above, the last is not an impossible translation. Dives was 'in torments' in Hades (Luke xvi. 23). Rufinus' conjecture that the clause means the same thing as 'buried,' in the earlier clause, might be accepted, for when the clause first occurs in the earliest of the three Arian Creeds, already mentioned, the statement 'buried' does not find a place. Against Rufinus' explanation, however, is the fact that the belief actually prevailed among contemporaries of Rufinus, Augustine for example, and in still earlier times that our Lord *did visit the dead*, 'infernus,' in the three days in which He was under the power of death.—J. M.

with tongues, of the miracles of healing and of other tokens of a divine presence, which made it so real to the primitive Christians. 'Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?' was the question asked by St. Paul of the disciples whom he found at Ephesus. And when they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus 'the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.'<sup>1</sup> If that oldest Creed was anti-Judaic in intention and use, we can understand how the appeal here, as throughout, was to truth of fact and history, and how the simple mention of the Holy Ghost introduced those other good things of which that blessed gift was the explanation and the pledge—'the holy church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the flesh.'

The word 'holy' is the bond of connection between 'the Holy Ghost' and the 'holy church.'<sup>2</sup> Kattenbusch points out that the conceptions of the holy and the heavenly are most closely related in the thought of the time, and that the holy church as here mentioned is probably thought of as a branch or colony upon earth of the City of God which is in heaven.

The word 'catholic' is, in the Eastern Creeds, of universal occurrence, and thence doubtless passed into the West.<sup>2</sup> Though it is found there in the middle of the fourth century and in some creeds of uncertain date, it did not apparently become thoroughly established until the seventh century.

<sup>1</sup> Acts xix. 2, 6.

<sup>2</sup> Heurtley, *History*, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> 'The holy church'—as it is in the old Roman Creed.

<sup>2</sup> Catholic.

It was not, when first employed, the Church's protest against heresy and schism, but rather expressed her consciousness of her mission, as extending to all men the benefits of salvation, and designedly excluding none. She is the totality of Christendom, the mother of all Christian souls. But by the time the word 'catholic' obtained a place in the Apostles' Creed it had attained its technical, anti-heretical sense. For 'the holy catholic Church,' Luther and the Lutheran Church to this day read 'the holy Christian Church.' When Luther broke with the Church of Rome, he saw that the visible Church could not be catholic in the sense of *one and universal*, but held that it still was catholic so far as it preserved the spirit and doctrine of the Master.

'The communion of saints.'

'The communion of saints,' Harnack describes as the 'most perplexing'<sup>1</sup> of all the articles in the Creed. It is, as we have seen, one of the latest of the additions. Passages in St. Augustine show that he was ignorant of it, as he passes directly from 'holy Church' to 'forgiveness of sins.'<sup>2</sup> It is found, as already stated, in the Creed of Niceta, the bishop of Remesia, a contemporary of Augustine, about A.D. 400; it is also found in the Creed as given by Caesarius of Arles about A.D. 500, but cannot be said to have been established before the eighth century. It is not found in Eastern Creeds. It is to be noted that it completes the succession of holy things: Holy Ghost, holy Church, com-

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Apostles' Creed*, p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> Heurtley, *History*, p. 11; Swainson, *Creeds*, p. 145.

munion of holies, as the words translated 'communion of saints' literally signify, for neither the Latin word nor that of the possible Greek original makes it quite clear whether the 'holies' here mentioned are holy things or holy persons. 'Sanctorum' is the genitive of both *sancta* and *sancti*. Kattenbusch holds that the phrase was used with a full consciousness of its ambiguity. The holiness of the Church is illustrated in both directions, since it has fellowship with heavenly things—in allusion, that is, to the sacraments—and also with heavenly beings, that is, with the saints of God. The latter is the meaning emphasised by some of the earliest commentators, who 'understood it especially of the communion which the saints on earth have with the saints departed.'<sup>1</sup> In the Middle Ages the Latin races generally inclined to the interpretation of *sanctorum* in the neuter, while the German races understood it as masculine and personal. Luther's rendering, 'the community of saints,' that is, the Christian Church, is etymologically tenable, but against historic probability. In the Westminster Confession the 'saints' are the believers and members of the Church on earth.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Heurtley, *Harm. Sym.*, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> The earliest exposition of the clause as a part of the Creed is to be found in the sermon of the Dacian, Niceta of Remesiana, about A.D. 400. His exposition of the clause is 'communion of saints.' Augustine, his contemporary, while ignorant of the clause as any part of the Creed, has in one of his sermons the phrase 'communion of sacraments' just in the place in which Niceta speaks of 'communion of saints' (A. E. Burn, *The Apostles' Creed* (Oxford Church Text-Books), 1914, p. 95). Dr. Burn himself thinks the most probable interpretation of the clause to be 'the communion of saints.'—J. M.

'Resurrection of the flesh,' as in the old Roman Creed.

'Resurrection of the flesh' is the ancient form of the article which the English version of the Creed has since 1543 rendered by 'resurrection of the body.' 'Flesh' was probably used on the one hand as a reaction from the views of those who held by a spiritual resurrection only, and on the other to emphasise the completeness of the work of redemption. There is no doubt, however, that in our language it savours of a materialism which it is desirable to avoid.

The ground-work of the Creed is trinitarian, although not dogmatically expressed.

We have to note, then, regarding the Apostles' Creed, that the ground-work is trinitarian: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost constitute the sacred name of God into which we are to be baptized. At the same time it enters upon no theoretic or dogmatic interpretation of the mystery; it puts its statements before us without further definitions or explanations. On this account it is often spoken of as being extremely simple compared with the other ancient Creeds, the Nicene and the Athanasian. In one sense it is so; 'it required no profound intellectual preparation in order to its comprehension; it spoke the language of no speculative school' <sup>1</sup>—and hence it 'has become the Creed of the laity, the briefest form in which the Christian faith has been presented.' <sup>2</sup> But in another sense, it has been contended, 'the reverse is far more true. It is the Apostles' Creed which is the really difficult Creed, which the other Creeds enable us to understand.' <sup>3</sup>

It is the Creed of the laity.

<sup>1</sup> Allen, *Chr. Instit.*, p. 284.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 292.

<sup>3</sup> Norris, *Theology*, p. 29.



It is doubtless due to the early date and predominant influence of the old Roman Creed that speculative elements were avoided, and that even its latest form is so untouched by the controversies of the centuries that rolled between.

#### VI. SUSTAINING TRUTHS IN THE CREED

God is Father and Creator. To these thoughts Jews and heathens had in some measure attained, but the thought of God's fatherhood in its fulness is the special revelation of the mind and heart and life of Christ. The Son came to reveal the Father. God is not abstract Divinity, dwelling in

Concerning  
God, Father  
and Creator.

‘heavens too high for our upreaching,  
Coldly sublime, intolerably just.’

Nay, but the All-Great is the All-Loving too. So through the thunder comes a human voice, saying :

‘O heart I made, a heart beats here!  
Face My hands fashioned, see it in Myself!  
Thou hast no power, nor may'st conceive of Mine;  
But love I gave thee, with Myself to love,  
And thou must love Me who have died for thee!’

This revelation of love is through ‘Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord.’ These terms indicate Christ's relation to the Father. The roots of His nature are in God; He is the full and final manifestation of the Divine. But, carefully as the Creed guards this truth, it is almost more insistent with regard to the other that this Divine Person was truly man. ‘Born of the Virgin Mary’ witnesses

Concerning  
Christ.

to His truly human nature. It is no dream, no illusion. Christ came into the world, and here He suffered and died. Death, however, was not the end, real as it was, involving burial and a temporary abode in the realm of the departed. Resurrection and ascension—triumph over death, the heavenly reign of their Lord—assure believers that they are not mistaken when they put their trust in Him, and in Him look forward to their own future life and entrance into glory. Meanwhile His Holy Spirit dwells and works among men, leading them to higher thoughts, inspiring them to nobler ways, taking of the things of Jesus and showing them to the soul. The Spirit fills the individual life; He also leads and guides the Church—the holy catholic Church, the multitude of the redeemed, who by whatever name they may be known on earth, however they may be divided by the barriers which circumstances or ignorance or prejudice have erected, are yet one in heart, one in love and service of the one Lord, one in the glorious hope of their calling. The ‘communion of saints’ is a reality to those who have thus realised their oneness in Christ. We have communion with all the saints of all the ages; there is nothing good of which we cannot claim to be the inheritors; before our faith even the veil falls away, and the Church militant and the Church triumphant are seen to be one—the great cloud of witnesses, whose voices join in one great hymn of praise. The ‘forgiveness of sins’ indicates the relation of the redemption effected by

Concerning the  
Holy Spirit  
and the  
Christian  
Church and  
life.

Christ to the soul, as the 'resurrection of the body' indicates its relation to the material part of our nature. Scripture points out that the whole outward creation is waiting for the redemption of the sons of God, and so it is not the spirit of man only, but the whole man that is to be redeemed and sanctified and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. 'The life everlasting,' though for some reason omitted from the old Roman Creed, belongs to some of the most ancient forms which we can regard as allied to it. 'Life and immortality' were indeed among the very first thoughts which brought Christianity its success. The resurrection of Christ was itself at first regarded chiefly as the evidence and guarantee of man's resurrection and future life with God, and so brought light into the darkness of heathendom, and spoke of new joys and hopes to the weary and sin-burdened. Not all at once could the world rise to the thought that the greatest blessedness open to man was in right living and communion with God. But a step to that sublimer conviction was a firm persuasion of the truth that God is not the God of the dead but of the living—for all live unto Him.

This brief sketch will be sufficient to illustrate the essential scripturalness of this Creed. Though, as we formerly pointed out, the theologies and creeds of the Church are not the direct outcome of Scripture, but rather of a condition of mind, in the formation of which Scripture has been only one, though perhaps the most powerful of influences,

The Creed is  
essentially  
scriptural.

yet none were more ready than the early Fathers of the Church to test their conclusions by reference to the sacred page.

#### VII. RECENT CONTROVERSY REGARDING THE APOSTLES' CREED

A brief allusion is all that is necessary with regard to the violent controversy which raged in Germany some years ago with reference to the ecclesiastical authority of the Apostles' Creed. In the Lutheran as in the Anglican Church, it forms part of the prescribed Liturgy. A preacher in Württemberg was charged by his congregation with not believing in the Creed and omitting it from the Baptismal service. On his deposition, his case was taken up by theologians of the advanced Liberal school, and in particular, Harnack in Berlin headed an agitation against this use of the Creed, specially referring to the clause respecting the Virgin Birth. He was answered by Professor Cremer of Greifswald, was supported by Achelis and Kattenbusch, and again opposed by Theodor Zahn of Erlangen and Zoeckler of Kiel. There would be no profit in going into the details of the controversy, which turns upon the extent to which the miraculous element, as compared with one susceptible of a spiritual rather than miraculous interpretation, enters into the Creed and is binding upon the faith of the Church at the present day. The one benefit which the controversy has brought is the amount of scholarly

investigation to which the honest endeavours of both sides to arrive at truth have been the stimulus.

Whatever be our attitude to questions like these—  
and there are signs that such questions may ere  
long press for solution among ourselves—we shall  
not be led to undervalue that ancient Symbol  
which with such wonderful moderation confines  
itself in the main to facts of history, even although  
we need the picture of the Saviour as presented to  
us in the Gospels to bring out the full significance  
and power of His life. Amid many rivals, as we have  
seen, the Apostles' Creed has stood the test of the sur-  
vival of the fittest. It comes down to us from long  
past ages. It has sustained and cheered thousands  
of Christian hearts. Though subordinated to Scrip-  
ture, though not literally apostolic in its origin, it  
must be regarded as, after the Bible, among the  
most precious of those helps by which our faith  
in Christ is expressed and defined.

Veneration  
due to the  
Creed.

## CHAPTER III

### THE NICENE CREED

#### I. THE NICENE CREED AND THE APOSTLES' CREED BELONG TO DIFFERENT TYPES

WHEN we pass from the Apostles' Creed, either in its earlier or its later form, to the consideration of that known as the Nicene Creed, we find ourselves in a different atmosphere and in face of an altogether different range of phenomena. Again we are called upon to witness the process by which, among many competitors, one is crowned, even as of the multitude of seeds which Spring brings forth, few attain to the bloom of Summer and fewer still to the maturity of Autumn. The Nicene Creed stands by itself as the representative of its special standpoint, but it has a history behind it and is the survivor of a whole family of similar compositions. It is the type of the Eastern, as the Apostles' Creed is the type of the Western Creeds. Wherein the difference between the two consists has been variously expressed. The Eastern has been characterised as the theological, the Western as the historical; the Eastern has to do with ideas, the Western with facts. 'This,' says a competent investigator, 'is true rather of the history of their

Like the Apostles' Creed, it is the survivor out of many similar.

Type of the Eastern Creeds, as the Apostles' Creed is of the Western.

development, than of the simple, skeleton form with which they began.' <sup>1</sup>

The question could not but be raised how far the two types of Creeds can be traced to a common stem. That the root of both is the baptismal formula, 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' is obvious, but did they begin immediately to diverge, or was the point of separation at some later date in their development? In the opening number of the *Journal of Theological Studies* [October 1899], Professor Sanday of Oxford has a well-informed and judicially written paper on this interesting and important question. 'The Apostles' and Nicene Creeds,' he observes, 'resemble each other so closely that they must be related in origin.' The inquiry into this relation resolves itself into an inquiry into that between the Eastern and Western Creeds generally. On this point German opinion may be divided into two groups. On one side are ranged Caspari, Zahn, Loofs, and a younger writer, Kunze; on the other side, Kattenbusch and Harnack. Speaking very roughly, we may say that the former group believe that from the first, or at least as far back as we can go, there were two distinct types of Creed, an Eastern and a Western. The two types are equally ancient, they believe, and they are related to each other, if at all, only through some common parent, some pristine Symbol, which is itself, so to speak, underground, out of our sight. The second group

Are they branches from a common stem?

Sanday: They are 'related in origin.'

Opinions of German scholars.

<sup>1</sup> Burn, *Introduction*, p. 70.

believe that the Western Creed was developed first, and had a century and a half, or more, of independent existence before it was carried eastwards and became the direct parent of the Eastern Creed.

(1) The two typical Creeds are 'sisters,' or (2) 'mother and daughter.'

On the one theory the two typical Creeds may be regarded as sisters; on the other, as respectively mother and daughter. Professor Sanday, holding the kinship of the two types, remarks of the hypothetical pristine Symbol, the common parent of both: 'The primitive Creed, it is fair to believe, arose before the controversies of the second century became acute. And the primitive Creed corresponded more nearly to the Roman type than to the Oriental. The Eastern mind played upon it; and as a result of that play, what began with a close resemblance to the Apostles' Creed ended with a resemblance to the Nicene.'

Harnack's view, on the contrary, is that until the time of the Arian controversy the formation of fixed symbols in the East had not begun.<sup>1</sup> There was 'an old, flexible, Christological rule,' or synopsis of teaching concerning Christ, and there were also 'old ceremonial or polemical formulas of belief in one God, the Creator, and His only Son Christ.'<sup>2</sup> A characteristic of Eastern Creeds, with very few exceptions, was the omission of the third article 'or else only a bare confession of belief in the Holy Ghost.'<sup>3</sup> 'It was towards the end of the third century . . . at some point in Syria-Palestine, that

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Apostles' Creed*, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.



the formation of symbols began in the East, when men—first, it seems, in theological circles—had come to know and value the Roman Symbol.’<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Heurtley finds the germ of both lines of development, the point of connection between both and the baptismal formula, in a simple Creed that formed part of the baptismal service of the Church of Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> Cyril, the Bishop of that See, describes [A.D. c. 347] in his catechetical lectures how the candidates for baptism ‘were first conducted into the vestibule of the Baptistery, and were bidden to turn their faces towards the west,’ that being the region of darkness, and to renounce Satan, saying, with significant gesture, stretching out and spreading asunder their hands: ‘I abjure thee, Satan, and all thy works, and all thy pomp, and all thy worship.’ Then, having thus broken all compact with Satan, they turned round to the east, the region of light, and said: ‘I believe in the Father and in the Son and in the Holy Ghost and in one baptism of repentance.’ In their growth from this simple formula, Dr. Heurtley suggests that the special direction taken by them was determined for the most part by a reference to 1 Cor. viii. 6: ‘One God, the Father, of whom are all things . . . and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things.’

Heurtley may be classed with Sanday and those who hold the first view.

The baptismal Creed of Jerusalem.

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Apostles' Creed*, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> ‘The Creed [found in Cyril] is so simple in its structure that it may well be believed to be of the highest antiquity, not improbably, indeed, the original confession of the mother Church of Christendom’ (Heurtley, *History*, p. 49). See also Burn, *Introduction*, p. 69.—J. M.

With this preliminary indication of the general affinity amidst noticeable divergence of Eastern and Western Creeds, we can proceed to the strange and eventful history of the great representative of the former.

## II. DIFFICULTY OF RECONCILING FUNDAMENTAL POSTULATES OF CHRISTIANITY

Scarcely had Christianity emerged from its condition of obscurity and the experience of persecution, and become a 'permitted religion' acknowledged by the State and counting the Emperor among its adherents, than the Church was convulsed by the most violent controversy which had yet arisen within its pale.<sup>1</sup> We shall be able to grasp it, at least in its main outlines, if we remember that there were two supreme convictions which had laid hold of the mind of the Church, which had been with it from the beginning, and which to this day are its fundamental postulates. The first is the unity of God, our inheritance from Judaism; the other, that Jesus was 'God manifest in flesh'—His character a divine character, His consciousness a consciousness of divinity, His being a divine being. The problem was, and is—How are these two convictions to be reconciled and brought into line? Can we maintain the divinity of Jesus without compromising the doctrine of the unity of God?

(a) The unity of God,  
(b) Jesus as God manifest in flesh.

<sup>1</sup> Although the Emperor Constantine was not actually baptized until after the Nicene Council—he was baptized only shortly before his death in A.D. 337.—J. M.

If we hold by the latter, must we not identify God and Jesus, holding that the Father Himself underwent all the experiences of the human life of Jesus, including His suffering and death—a phase of thought to which the name of Patripassianism was given—and that while Jesus lived there was no other God—the view known as Sabellianism, after its most distinguished teacher? Or, on the other hand, must we not understand the divinity of Jesus in some imperfect and inferior sense, in which case worship would be offered to one who was not in the highest and truest sense God, and the heathen idolatry which the Church had wrestled with and overcome would be revived and reintroduced, subtly but not less dangerously? These are the extremes to which those who accept the two basal positions of the unity of God and the divinity of Christ are tempted to go—the extreme of Patripassianism or Sabellianism on the one hand, and what came to be known as Arianism upon the other. In the second half of the third century there were two great schools or centres of Christian teaching, one at Alexandria and the other at Antioch. The former inclined to the mystical, speculative, semi-pantheistic interpretation of the truths of religion; the other to the rational—what it would regard as the ‘common sense’—interpretation of the same truths. The latter was somewhat rough and ready in its methods, neglecting the finer shades, the subtler implications of thought and feeling, and contenting itself with broad definitions and prac-

Reconciliation  
neither by  
Patripassian-  
ism

nor Arianism.

The Alex-  
andria and the  
Antioch  
schools of  
Christian  
teaching in the  
third century.

tical approximations. Through the meeting of these two tendencies, like that of flint and steel, the spark was struck which soon spread into a conflagration.

What led to the Nicene Council—Athanasius and Arius at Alexandria.

On a certain occasion in the year 319, Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, was preaching to his clergy on the doctrine of the trinity. Among those present was a presbyter named Arius, a man of ability and influence, but of somewhat obstinate and turbulent disposition, who had studied at Antioch and imbibed the views which there prevailed. He protested against the bishop's sermon as Sabellian, at least in tendency, and set up in opposition to it the view of Christ as an inferior and derived deity. The relation of Christ to God had been described as that of a son to a father. But if the Son was begotten of the Father, then the Son had a beginning of existence, there was a time when he was not; and so, owing His being to the Father, He was Himself a creature, though the firstborn of all creatures, and the agent in the creation of all the rest. Though a lofty dignity was thus ascribed to the Son, the view involved the position that Christ was a son by adoption, not by nature, owing His exaltation to a moral probation and having no absolute knowledge of the Father's mind and will, which He was therefore unable to make known to others. These were religious defects, impairing the fulness of that revelation which the Church believed she had received in Christ, and unsatisfactory to the souls which believed they had in Christ seen 'God in the voice and glory of a man.' The illus-

Arius: 'There was a time when Christ was not.'

tration—although it is more than an illustration—of the relation of Father and Son, while the nearest and most helpful within our reach, is doubtless inadequate when applied to divine things. All such analogies of divine to human relationships, expressed too, as they can only be, in human language, must be inadequate. But if the metaphor was thus pushed to an extreme in one direction, it was capable of a different and opposite interpretation. If among men sonship implies a beginning of existence subsequent to that of the father, it also implies identity of nature. The son is of the same nature with the father, in a true sense his marrow and equal. It was upon this interpretation that the opponents of Arius fastened, holding it to be justified by the analogy, in accordance with Scripture, and satisfying to the religious sense.

The inadequate yet scriptural illustration of 'Father and Son.'

In accordance with Scripture, we say—for to Scripture both parties appealed, and the Arians accumulated much scriptural evidence in support of their own views, neglecting, as their opponents alleged, and as partisans always neglect, the evidence which told the other way. Then Arius, with more zeal than discretion, took what was, in the first instance at any rate, a question for the schools into the market and the street, translated his theories into verses which were sung to the tunes of popular ditties, till the dispute became a matter of common gossip, a subject of ridicule to the heathen, and at last a menace to the peace of the Empire. It was

The dispute was taken up by the whole population of Alexandria.

Constantine  
summons a  
General  
Council.

at this juncture, after various attempts at composing the difference had failed, that the Emperor Constantine determined to summon a General Council of bishops from every part of the Church to consider and settle the question which had thus been raised.

### III. THE COUNCIL OF NICAËA, A.D. 325

It is impossible here to enter upon the external aspects of the famous Council which met at Nicaea, in Bithynia, in the year 325 ; are not these written in the picturesque pages of Dean Stanley, and of many another historian of the Church ? The Council consisted of over 300 bishops—the number signing the Creed which was its outcome was 318. Many of these, we are told, bore upon their faces and limbs the marks of persecutions then not long ended,<sup>1</sup> a circumstance which greatly contributed to enhance the authority of their decisions.

Eusebius of  
Caesarea pro-  
poses a Creed  
for acceptance.

The Arians presented a concise statement of their position, then Eusebius of Caesarea, known to us as the great historian of the early Church, an aged and learned bishop, proposed a form for the general acceptance. It is a disputed point whether the Creed thus suggested was that actually in use in the Church of Caesarea, or had been composed by Eusebius for the occasion. The former is the generally accepted view, while the latter is the opinion of Harnack. Harnack indeed acknow-

<sup>1</sup> Burn, *Introduction*, p. 76.

ledges that his whole attitude on the subject of Eastern Creeds, to which allusion has already been made, depends upon that assumption. In any case the form proposed by Eusebius was couched in such terms that the Arians professed themselves willing to accept it, as they had previously found no difficulty in accepting the passages of Scripture which had been cited against them—of course, putting upon these an interpretation of their own.

The Arians are willing to accept it.

It was at the suggestion of the Emperor himself, prompted, it is said, by Hosius of Cordova, his most trusted adviser, that the Creed of Eusebius was stiffened by the insertion of the famous word *ὁμοούσιος*, 'same in essence.'<sup>1</sup> With this addition and one or two minor alterations, most of them tending in the same direction, it became the deliverance of the Council. While really proceeding from a minority, as the direct opponents of Arius at first were, though a minority clear in their convictions and sure of their cause, it was signed by all but two of the bishops present, partly as a result of the debates themselves, partly for the sake of peace, and partly no doubt through the Emperor's influence. The Creed thus adjusted ran as follows :—

Homoousios is added at the Emperor's suggestion.

The Creed is signed by all present, two excepted.

'We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only-begotten, that is of the essence [*οὐσία*] of the Father; God of God, light of light,

Creed of the Nicene Council.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix F.

very God of very God, begotten not made, the same in essence [ὁμοούσιος] with the Father: by whom all things were formed, both those in heaven and those on earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down and was incarnate, was made man, suffered, and rose again the third day, ascended into the heavens, shall come to judge the quick and the dead. And in the Holy Ghost.

‘But those who say, There was a time when he was not; and, Before he was begotten he was not; and, He was formed out of non-existent things; or affirm that the Son of God is of another substance [ὑπόστασις] or essence [οὐσία], or is created, or mutable, or variable—these men the catholic and apostolic church of God anathematises.’<sup>1</sup>

It was intended to be declaratory of the existing Rules of Faith, not to supersede them.

‘The Creed,’ it has been said, ‘thus propounded to the whole Church by the Council, with the Emperor’s approval, was intended as a standard of doctrine, an authoritative exposition of the “one faith” contained in the varying baptismal Creeds and the rules of faith held in reverence by the different Churches, which no one wished to disturb.’<sup>2</sup>

Differences in the Creed as now accepted.

Those who are familiar with what is commonly cited as the Nicene Creed, in the form, for example, in which it appears in the Communion Service of

<sup>1</sup> The opinions anathematised are expressed in the very terms of the Arians; the clauses setting forth the heretical opinions, *e.g.* ‘There was a time when he was not,’ are the very watchwords and formulas of the Arian party. The reference to οὐσία and ὑπόστασις as synonymous applies explicitly to the usage of Arius himself (Fisher, *Hist. of Doct.*, 1908, p. 139; Harnack, *Hist. of Dogma*).—J. M.

<sup>2</sup> Burn, *Introduction*, p. 80.



the Church of England, will note many important differences between it and the Creed just given, the truth being that the Anglican form is the result of a further movement now to be described.

The Council of Nicaea neither brought peace to the Church and the Empire, nor made an end of Arianism. On the contrary, there was a period about the middle of the fourth century when victory seemed about to rest with the Arians. There was a large middle party who were neither Arians nor Athanasians [as we may call the orthodox party, from their great champion], but favoured some form of compromise, and oscillated, or fell into combinations and re-combinations on the one side or the other. Then of the successors of Constantine several distinctly upheld Arianism, possibly, as we shall see, because it had greater affinity with the political order to which they were committed. Synods were held, with varying result, at Antioch, Sardica,<sup>1</sup> Sirmium,<sup>2</sup> and Alexandria. Of these the second and third of Sirmium are noteworthy as having witnessed the predominance of Semi-Arianism, marked by the substitution of *ὁμοιούσιος*, 'of like essence,' in place of the *ὁμοούσιος*, 'of the same essence,' of the Nicene formula. 'Like to the Father who begat him'<sup>3</sup> is the corresponding expression of the Creed which, from a remark of Athanasius, has been called the Dated Creed of Sirmium.

Fluctuations  
after A.D. 325  
between  
Arianism and  
'Athanasian-  
ism.'

<sup>1</sup> Sardica, now Sofia, in Bulgaria.—J. M.

<sup>2</sup> Sirmium, on the Save, below the junction with the Drina, in modern Austria.—J. M.

<sup>3</sup> Burn, *Introduction*, p. 92.

## IV. THE NICENE CREED AS WE NOW HAVE IT

The next point in the development is the revised Creed of Jerusalem, which is found in a treatise called *Ancoratus*, or the 'Anchored One,' written by Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, about 374. It is almost identical with our present Nicene Creed, which until recently has been believed to be the work of the Council of Constantinople in 381. It is due to the labours of the late Dr. Hort, best known perhaps from his association with the late Bishop Westcott in a revised Text of the Greek New Testament, that this identification of the revised Creed of Jerusalem with our present Nicene Creed has been established.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Hort's theory is that 'Epiphanius had lived for some time in Palestine, since he shows a knowledge of circumstances relating to Jerusalem, Eleutheropolis in Judaea near to his birthplace, and Caesarea. He gives a list of bishops of Jerusalem who lived through the troublous times. In 377 he corresponded with Basil about dissensions among the brethren on the Mount of Olives. It is therefore easy to understand how the revised Creed came into his hands.' This Creed is really the old baptismal Creed of Jerusalem as recorded by Cyril, with theological terms and phrases of the Nicene Creed proper inserted into it.<sup>2</sup> Thus, as has been said, the relation of the Creed of the Nicene Council to our Nicene Creed is like that of a bud from a garden rose to the rose-bush in which wild-rose

Almost identical with the revised Creed of Jerusalem, before A. D. 374.

The revised was the old Creed of Jerusalem with Nicene additions.

<sup>1</sup> Burn, *Introduction*, p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

stock and the grafted bud are growing together. 'The improved theology was grafted into the stock of the old historic faith.'

It is certain, then, that this revised Creed was not the work of the Council of Constantinople. It is even doubtful whether it ever had the sanction of that Council.<sup>1</sup> The records of its proceedings have been lost, with the exception of some 'canons of doubtful meaning,'<sup>2</sup> and the chief authorities of the immediately subsequent time do not mention it.<sup>3</sup> The Creed appears, for the first time after its occurrence in Epiphanius, at the Council of Chalcedon in the year 451, at the second session of which it was read after the Creed of Nicaea, under the name of the Faith set forth by the 150 Holy Fathers. The Council of Constantinople was so termed, as the Council of Nicaea was commonly referred to as that of the 318. 'The Chalcedon fathers accepted and ratified the Faith set forth at Constantinople, and inserted it in their Definition of Faith.'<sup>4</sup>

How the Creed of Jerusalem thus came to be accepted as that of Constantinople is wrapped in obscurity. It was a deacon of Constantinople that read it at Chalcedon, and it may have been that the patriarch of the imperial city wished it to be recognised as the centre of orthodoxy, and also to give the Council of Constantinople,<sup>5</sup> which consisted of representatives only from Thrace and Asia Minor, an appearance of having been oecumenical and thus

Our Nicene Creed was not the production of the Council of Constantinople, A. D. 381.

Why did the Council of Chalcedon, A. D. 451, call it the Creed of Constantinople?

<sup>1</sup> Heurtley, *History*, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> Burn, *Introduction*, p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> Heurtley, *History*, p. 82.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>5</sup> D. K. F. Nösgen, *Symbolik*.

Customary name, 'The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed.'

It differs from the original Nicene Creed chiefly *re* the Holy Spirit.

on a level with the Council of Nicaea. Whether by inadvertence or design, the Creed has ever since been associated with the Second Council,<sup>1</sup> and for the last 250 years it has been customary to distinguish it from the Nicene proper as the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed.

The chief point in which the Creed thus ratified at Chalcedon differs from the original Nicene, is in the third part. The Nicene Creed had terminated abruptly—'And in the Holy Ghost'—either because this was the general form of Eastern Creeds or because it had not been thought necessary to insert articles on points not in dispute at the time.<sup>2</sup> But now a further development of Arianism had taken place in the heresy of Macedonius who was deposed from the bishopric of Constantinople in 360. He founded the sect of the *Pneumatomachoi*,<sup>3</sup> who denied the deity of the Holy Ghost. This view followed as logically from the Arian position, as the contrary view followed from the Nicene definition of the consubstantiality [co-essentiality] of the Father and the Son. There was therefore now added to the words, 'And in the Holy Ghost,' this significant expansion: 'The Lord, and the Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is to be worshipped and glorified, who spake through the prophets.' The last clause is said to have been directed against certain Gnostic and other heretics who maintained

'Who proceedeth from the Father'—why added.

<sup>1</sup> D. K. F. Nösgen, *Symbolik*.

<sup>2</sup> Heurtley, *History*, p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

that the Old Testament was the work of an evil and malignant Being, not of the God revealed in the New Testament.

Besides the clauses referring to the Holy Spirit, the so-called Constantinopolitan Creed contained several additions to the original Nicene. The most important of these were: 'of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary' after 'was incarnate'; 'crucified for us under Pontius Pilate'; the reference to the Scriptures in connection with the resurrection of Christ; 'sitteth on the right hand of the Father'; 'whose kingdom shall have no end'; and the articles which follow that referring to the Holy Ghost, namely: 'One holy catholic and apostolic church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.'

On the other hand, there was apparently an important omission of the explanatory clause attached to 'only begotten' in the original Nicene Symbol, viz. 'that is, of the essence of the Father.' On this omission the theory has been founded (by Harnack) that a compromise had been arranged, and that under cover of the phrase *ὁμοούσιος*, a kind of Semi-Arianism had been legalised in the Church.<sup>1</sup> But the two phrases—*ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Πατρὸς* and *ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρί*—had throughout the controversy been recognised as equivalent; and the later Creed avoided useless repetitions, as witness the omission also of 'God of God' (afterwards restored in the

Other additions.

An omission, 'that is of the essence of the Father'—a useless repetition.

Harnack's fanciful theory.

<sup>1</sup> Burn, *Introduction*, p. 121.

Western text) which is included in the stronger term—‘very God of very God.’

#### V. THE FILIOQUE CLAUSE: THE DOUBLE PROCESSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

But there is one addition to this ancient Creed still to be noted, an addition which receives an adventitious importance from the fact that it was the ostensible cause of the great schism between East and West. ‘Who proceedeth from the Father,’ the symbol as proclaimed at Chalcedon had read. ‘Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son’ is the reading of every Western edition of the Creed to-day. At what date this formulation of the ‘double procession’ of the Holy Spirit, as it is called, was made, it is impossible to determine with any certainty. Though the liturgical use of the Nicene Creed—that is, our Nicene Creed—can be traced back to the fifth century in the East, the first record of its introduction into a Western liturgy<sup>1</sup> is found in connection with the Third Council of Toledo in 589, when Reccared, King of the Visigoths, made in the name of his people a national renunciation of Arianism. It may have been that, like most proselytes, they were more orthodox than the orthodox. They certainly accepted the *Filioque* doctrine, for they describe it in one of their canons, but the authorities for the Creed quoted by the Council do not give the words of the celebrated *Filioque*

Date when formulated is not known.

Approved by Third Council of Toledo, A.D. 589.

<sup>1</sup> Burn, *Introduction*, pp. 114-16.

clause. Whenever introduced, however, it must have been not long after this, and it seems certain that Spain was the country which originated it. Thence it passed to France, and from France to England.<sup>1</sup> 'The Roman Church long hesitated before accepting it. Leo III., when urged to sanction it by the legates sent by Charlemagne from the Synod of Aix, A.D. 809, refused to do so, though acknowledging the truth of the doctrine; and to add weight to his refusal, and for the safeguard of the genuine text, he caused the Creed to be engraved on two silver tablets,<sup>2</sup> on one in Greek, on the other in Latin, which he set up in a conspicuous place in the Church of St. Paul.'<sup>3</sup>

Refused official sanction though acknowledged by Pope Leo III., A.D. 809.

#### VI. THE REAL ISSUES AT STAKE WERE NOT METAPHYSICAL BUT RELIGIOUS

What now are we to think of all this? Are we to set it aside as metaphysical hair-splitting, as playing upon words, as the extravagances of a controversy in which emperor, and courtier, and bishop took part to further their own ends—ends tainted with worldliness and ambition, and as far as possible from the simplicity and seriousness of Christ? Those who read the painful story of the intrigue and violence which often attached themselves to the controversy, may be pardoned if they

<sup>1</sup> Heurtley, *History*, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> Or *shields*.

<sup>3</sup> The Roman Church decreed the 'double procession' of the Holy Spirit at the Fourteenth General Council, the Second of Lyons, A.D. 1274.—J. M.

see in it little more. Yet if religion is sometimes the counter with which men play, it is oftener the wind which marks its course by the way in which it tosses about, like the dust of the street, the things of men and nations. And if any one doubts that religion was here at stake, that a religious motive was the strongest of all—the answer is—Athanasius! The controversy which aroused all the zeal and absorbed all the energy of such a man cannot have been wholly vain and worldly. It was Dean Stanley who said of the Eastern and Western Creeds alike that they ‘have but a very slight bearing on the nature of the Divine Revelation in Jesus Christ, that they do not touch at all (except in the expression “Light of Light”) on the moral, which is the only important aspect of the doctrine.’<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless he admits elsewhere that Arianism was the partial development of polytheistic tendencies; that the unity of the Father and the Son, which Athanasius maintained against these tendencies, is still needed as the basis of sound representation of the divine acts.<sup>2</sup> Dean Stanley even quotes with approval ‘a profound remark of a gifted member of the Eastern Church, that one grand result of the Nicene decision was the reassertion of the *moral* nature, the *moral* perfection, of the Divinity.’ Of Athanasius he testifies that ‘he had firmly grasped the idea that it was a Christian duty to reconcile imaginary differences, and distinguish the essential and un-

The condemnation of Arianism was a check to polytheistic tendencies.

The ‘homo-ousia’ of Christ with the Father, a reassertion of the moral nature of the Deity.

<sup>1</sup> A. P. Stanley, *Christian Institutions*, 4th ed., 1884, p. 341.

<sup>2</sup> A. P. Stanley, *Eastern Church*, new ed., 1884, p. 238.



essential';<sup>1</sup> and that 'both in discipline and in doctrine he gave proof that he was willing to sacrifice the letter to the spirit.' 'In the writings of Athanasius,' says Dr. Burn, 'the primary interest is certainly religious. Even Gibbon lays aside, as some one has said, "his solemn sneer" to do honour to the memory of this champion of the faith, who never lost heart, but could make of failure "a triumph's evidence for the fulness of the days."'<sup>2</sup> If for a time it was *Athanasius contra mundum*, it was due to the courage and devotion of Athanasius that Christianity did not come down to us as a modified heathenism, if indeed, under the disintegrating influences to which Arius would have opened the door, it had come down to us at all.

The interest of Athanasius was primarily religious.

The question as to the value of the work then done must be answered by two determining considerations: Was it work that had to be done? and Was it done as well as it could have been with the materials available? We have seen the fundamental postulates from which the controversy started—the unity of God and the divinity of Christ. Many, then, may have held them together, as many even now recommend that they should be held, without any attempt to reconcile them, or explain their relation to each other. And so long as no question is raised this may be possible, though inconsistent with the instinctive desire of the human mind to attain unity of conception. But when

Was a precise definition of the relationship of *Son* and *Father* necessary?

Yes, for the explanations

<sup>1</sup> A. P. Stanley, *Eastern Church*, new ed., 1884, pp. 239-40.  
Burn, *Introduction*, p. 97.

being offered  
impaired the  
original con-  
ceptions.

Necessarily,  
the termin-  
ology of con-  
temporary  
Greek phil-  
osophy was  
employed.

explanations are given which threaten the purity of the original conceptions, which lead to consequences both theoretical and practical that change the character and undermine the basis of the Christian religion, the Church acting through her best minds must endeavour to give an explanation which, if not more verifiable in one sense, is so in another, as a hypothesis probably truer because leading to worthier results. And if, in dealing with the question, the theologians of the third and fourth centuries applied the methods and used the terminology of Greek philosophy, this was because they found in them the readiest and the most highly finished instruments for the purpose. We have in our day to do the same. If the same fundamental postulates face us and demand explanation, we can only meet the demand through the philosophical concepts of our day, or else abandon the attempt to meet it at all. Every such endeavour must be estimated according to the circumstances of the time. As has already been said, the Creeds, when they attain to general acceptance, prove that they are the best solutions of the problems presented to the Church which the Church of any particular time can frame with the materials at her disposal. With new opportunities and new light, new possibilities arise.

Principal Fairbairn remarks concerning the Nicene theology, that it is 'hard to say whether it did more eminent service or disservice to the Christian conception of God'; and he brings against it the specific charge that the 'division of the Persons

within the Godhead had as its necessary result the division of God from man, and the exaltation of miraculous and unethetical agencies as the means of bridging over the gulf.<sup>1</sup> But Professor Allen has admirably shown, in his *Christian Institutions*, that it was Arianism which opened out the gulf between God and man, making the former abstract Divinity, arbitrary will, apart from all interest in and care over the creature, which as an emanation from Deity must ever be kept at a distance from, and infinitely inferior to, its divine source. On the other hand, the Athanasian doctrine meant 'as an inevitable inference from the doctrine of the Incarnation, the deification of men, of that whole race of humanity which God in Christ had taken into organic relationship with Himself.'<sup>2</sup> The same writer proceeds to show how, consequently, the Roman Emperors soon perceived the affinity between Arianism and the despotism of the imperial policy; how from the same instinct the Gothic barbarians who overran the empire tended to embrace Christianity in its Arian forms. On the contrary, 'the Nicene faith, and more particularly Athanasius as its exponent, stand for resistance to the Empire, and, in the last analysis of causes, it

Did the assertion of the 'homoousia' of Christ divide God from mankind?

No. Not Athanasianism but Arianism opens out a gulf between God and man.

Natural alliance between Arianism and the imperial despotism.

<sup>1</sup> 'The Church, when it thought of the Father, thought more of the First Person in relation to the Second than of God in relation to man: when it thought of the Son, it thought more of the Second Person in relation to the First than of humanity in relation to God. . . . The Sonship within the Trinity is without its most majestic and gracious sense till it finds its consequent and correlate in the sonship of man' (Fairbairn, *Christ in Mod. Theol.*, pp. 91-2).—J. M.

<sup>2</sup> Allen, *Chr. Instit.*, pp. 307-8.

was the doctrine of the Trinity or the Coequality of the Son with the Father which completed the disintegration of Roman power and resolved the Empire into its original fragments.’<sup>1</sup> That doctrine ‘was incompatible with the spirit of empire resting on force for its sanction; it promised individual liberty and national freedom; and it meant the ultimate destruction of an imperial despotism.’<sup>2</sup> So, later, it meant civilisation as opposed to barbarism; order and liberty as opposed to force. The believer, though a slave, was a freeman in Christ, through union with whom he had become a son of God. And it is noted that the disappearance of Arianism was due to no outburst of persecution, but simply to ‘an inability to hold its own against the rising enthusiasm which waited upon the Nicene Faith.’<sup>3</sup> Churches have never been built upon negations, the moral force and constructive power which resides in an idea is a valid argument in favour of its essential truth.

Our philosophy may differ from that of Nicene days. ‘The Nicene form,’ it has been observed, ‘is based on the conception of a *substance*<sup>4</sup> [=essence], lying beneath the properties of a thing and forming their basis, a conception which is rejected by modern philosophy. The terms “substance” [essence] and “person” have actually interchanged meanings; for when *we* speak of a person, we mean the essence of a man, whereas the substance, we say, is con-

‘Athanasianism’ ennobles every man—a freeman in Christ.’

The Nicene conception of essence or substance.

<sup>1</sup> Allen, *Chr. Instit.*, p. 306.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 307.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318.

<sup>4</sup> *American Journal of Theology*, vi. 4.

stantly changing.’<sup>1</sup> However this may be, human nature, whose religious needs the Creeds were framed to satisfy, and which it is the supreme task of philosophy to interpret, remains the same from age to age, and the doctrine which was elaborated through mental labours and agonies of conscientious striving in one age, however remote, must, if we set it against the background of the circumstances amid which it arose, reveal a core of meaning, of truth won, which shall remain a human possession until the end of time.

<sup>1</sup> The terms *οὐσία* and *ὑπόστασις* are used synonymously by Arius. The synonymity is implied in the anathematising clauses appended to the original Nicene Creed—*ὑποστάσεως ἢ οὐσίας*. ‘At Alexandria, a Synod which met in A.D. 362 . . . returned to the Nicene Creed under Athanasius’ influence, distinguishing for the relief of doubters two uses of the word *hypostasis*, as *substance* or as *subsistence*; in the latter sense alone could three hypostases exist in the Godhead’ (Curtis, *History of Creeds*, etc., 1911, p. 69). At the Synod of Alexandria ‘they were careful to explain in what way the terms *ὑπόστασις* and *οὐσία* might be distinguished, so that those who clung to the term *μία ὑπόστασις* (= *οὐσία*) might not be offended when they heard others say *τρῆς ὑποστάσεις*, meaning not three substances but three subsistences’ (Burn, *Introduction*, p. 100). Thus the term *οὐσία*, Latin *essentia* or *substantia*, became ultimately limited to the signification *essence*, while *ὑπόστασις*, Latin *persona*, became limited to *person* in the technical sense of that term. See further, Curtis, *History of Creeds*, p. 84. The fact that the Eastern word *hypostasis* corresponds etymologically to the Western *substantia* opens up the perplexing question discussed by Bethune-Baker, whether the term *ὁμοούσιος* (*consubstantialis*) had a Western origin. See pp. 112-13 and Appendix F.—J. M.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE 'QUICUNQUE VULT' OR 'ATHANASIAN CREED'

#### I. ITS HISTORY

THE third of the early Christian Creeds, the use of which has survived to the present day, is the *Quicunque Vult*, a name derived from its opening words, *Quicunque vult salvus esse*—'Whosoever will be saved,' or, as it is entitled in the English Book of Common Prayer, the 'Confession of our Christian Faith, commonly called the Creed of St. Athanasius.' 'Its history,' says Dr. Burn, 'is one of the most difficult subjects in Patristic literature.' 'Everything relating to its history,' says Dr. Heurtley, 'is involved in obscurity.' It is, in fact, no more the work of Athanasius than the Apostles' Creed is of the apostles, and much less than the Nicene Creed is of the Council of Nicaea. In the two former cases a substantial agreement in doctrine is apparently the chief motive for association with the name, while in the case of the Nicene Creed there may have been a desire to evade the injunction of the third and fourth oecumenical Councils, those of Ephesus and Chalcedon, that no other Creed than the Nicene should be composed, exhibited, or produced under penalty of anathema. The ascription

The Athanasian Creed is not the composition of Athanasius.

of the *Quicumque* to Athanasius dates from the ninth century; but since the middle of the seventeenth the Athanasian authorship has been abandoned, not only by Protestant, but by Roman Catholic scholars, the evidence against it being conclusive.

Has been ascribed to Athanasius since the ninth century.

The actual authorship is very much a matter of conjecture, and opinions differ even as to the period to which it is to be assigned. In the former respect it has been compared with the *Te Deum*, to which in several features it is not without resemblance. It has been described as ‘a musical Creed or Dogmatic Psalm,’ and it was most probably prepared for the use of the monks by whom it was daily recited in the office of Prime. All are agreed as to its appearance in its present form in the beginning of the ninth century, and most opinions concur that the place of its origin was probably Southern Gaul, though some with less likelihood would assign it to Northern Africa. In those regions the influence of St. Augustine was predominant, and parallels to many of its clauses have been adduced from the writings of Augustine and other Latin Fathers.

Authorship uncertain.

First appearance beginning of ninth century.

Place of origin, Southern Gaul.

Dr. Waterland, whose *Critical History* of this Creed, first published in 1724, is still one of the standard works upon the subject, ascribed it to Hilary, once Abbot of Lerins and afterwards Bishop of Arles, and held that it was composed by him about the year 430. This view was generally accepted in this country till about forty years ago, when there was a revival of interest in this Creed owing to the Report of the Ritual Commission of

the Church of England in 1867. It was thereupon re-examined in a monograph by Mr. Foulkes and in Histories of the Creeds by two Cambridge professors, Dr. Lumby's History being published in 1873, and Dr. Swainson's in 1875. The results of these investigations<sup>1</sup> substantially agree. The conclusions reached by Dr. Lumby are as follows :—

Summary of  
investigations  
of Lumby and  
Swainson,  
1873-75.

i. Before A.D. 809 there is no trustworthy notice of any confession called by the name of St. Athanasius.

ii. Before that date two separate compositions existed which form the ground-work of the present *Quicumque*.

iii. For some time after that date all quotations are made only from the former of these compositions.

iv. Down to A.D. 813 the *Quicumque* was not known to those who were most likely to have heard of it, had it been in existence.

v. It is found nearly as we use it in A.D. 870.

vi. A comparison of the various MSS. shows that after the combination of the two parts the text was for some time in an unsettled or transition state. Dr. Lumby's conclusion is that 'somewhere between 813 and 850 the Creed was brought nearly into the form in which we now use it; that before the earlier of these dates it was not known, but that in Gaul at least it gained general acceptance soon after the latter date, and that the strong expressions of its warning clauses are to be traced to the fierce contests which at that period agitated the whole ecclesiastical world.'

<sup>1</sup> Lumby, *Creeds*, p. 239.



Dr. Swainson’s conclusion is that the Creed in its present form was certainly not known before the later years of the eighth century;<sup>1</sup> but the evidence seems to him to show that it was ‘completed in the province of Rheims between the years 860 and 870, and that when completed it steadily and gradually gained favour. It was attributed at once to the great Patriarch of Alexandria,’<sup>2</sup> ‘the royal-hearted Athanase.’ Dr. Swainson continues: ‘Not merely did it eclipse the numerous Creeds and Rules of Faith which had been previously assigned to him, but by its intrinsic merits, by its antithetical swing, and by its fitness for chanting, it drove out all the verbose and laborious compilations of Paulinus and Charlemagne and the Councils.’

Reasons why it  
superseded  
other Creeds.

The question is obviously one of evidence, of the patient examination of MSS., commentaries, and quotations, and when new evidence is forthcoming the results of previous labours must be revised.

The Cambridge professors were followed by Mr. Ommaney, who, ‘rejecting the composite theory, produces evidence of the existence of the *Quicunque* in its entirety antecedently to the ninth century.’ And he shows that ‘there is good reason for believing that it may be traced as far back as to the end, probably even to the middle of the fifth century.’<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Heurtley holds that, ‘even on external grounds, we have good reasons for assigning the *Quicunque* to

<sup>1</sup> Swainson, *Creeds*, p. 195.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 448; cf. Heurtley, *History*, p. 117.

<sup>3</sup> Heurtley, *History*, p. 117.

a date at least as early as the middle of the seventh century, if not earlier'<sup>1</sup>—while 'internal considerations make it probable' that Mr. Ommaney's view is the correct one.

Burn associates it with Honoratus, Abbot of Lerins in S.E. Gaul, A.D. 420-30.

A still more recent and very elaborate investigation is that in the fourth volume of the *Cambridge Texts and Studies*, by Dr. A. E. Burn, and in the *Introduction to the Creeds* by the same author. After an examination of the external and internal evidence of the various MSS. and early commentaries on the Creed, he rejects the 'two-portion theory' and holds that the Creed may be traced back to the theological school associated with the monastery of Lerins, and even, conjecturally, to its abbot, Honoratus. 'The Church of Gaul,' he remarks, 'had then a special gift for full-toned and worthy liturgical language, to which the present forms of the Apostles' Creed and the *Te Deum* bear witness.' He suggests that the *Quicumque* was written with the special object of meeting the errors of Priscillian and his followers. Priscillian was a rich and well-born gentleman of Spain, in character self-confident and ambitious, who is noteworthy as the first Christian to be put to death for heresy. His doctrine of God was Sabellian—that is, he obliterated the distinction of the Persons, and probably denied altogether the personality of the Holy Spirit. On the person of Christ he was Apollinarian—that is, he denied the reality of Christ's human nature, holding that He only assumed human flesh, but had no human soul.

Its motive—to meet the heresies of Priscillian.

<sup>1</sup> Heurtley, *History*, p. 117.

Against such vague and mystical teaching the clear-cut definitions of the *Quicunque* rang out their defiance. The apparent dependence of its authors on Augustine leads Mr. Burn to assign 420 as its earliest possible date,<sup>1</sup> while the absence of any reference such as might have been expected to Nestorianism, or the doctrine which distinguished the natures in Christ to the extent of destroying the unity of His personality, gives 430 as the lower limit.<sup>2</sup> Between these dates he holds that the *Quicunque* was given to the world.<sup>3</sup>

Date—  
A.D. 420-30.  
Why?

## II. THE CONTENTS OF THE ‘QUICUNQUE’— THE ‘DAMNATORY CLAUSES’

Whether originally separate or not, two portions may be clearly distinguished in the so-called Athanasian Creed, the first setting forth the doctrine of the trinity and the second that of the person of Christ. As embracing these two cardinal tenets, it received its earliest, and perhaps, as Dr. Burn urges, its only proper title, that of *Fides Catholica*, ‘a Catholic Faith,’ and was described by writers of the ninth century as a *sermo*, an instruction, the name *symbolum* not being given to it until the end of that century. In regard to the trinity, it is more definite than either the Apostles’ Creed or the Nicene Creed, inasmuch as it states more

Two divisions—  
(1) Concerning the trinity ;  
(2) Concerning the person of Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Burn, *Introduction*, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>3</sup> For criticism of Dr. Burn’s reasoning as to the date, see Curtis, *History of Creeds*, pp. 83-4.

Christ is  
'perfect God,  
perfect man—  
one Christ.'

clearly the relation of the Three Persons to each other and to the absolute unity of the Godhead. In the second part the Creed carefully and tersely states the relations of the divine and human natures in the Person of Christ, and rejects the heresies which threatened the reality of the 'perfect God, perfect man—one Christ.'

The three  
'damnatory  
clauses.'

A distinguishing feature of the Athanasian Creed, and probably that which has attracted most attention to it in recent years, is the presence of the so-called 'damnatory clauses.' There is a threefold denunciation of those who reject the Catholic faith. The 'damnatory clauses' have been a great cause of offence, as inconsistent with Christian charity, and as going beyond what the Church is entitled to claim. In their justification, the verse, Mark xvi. 16, has been appealed to—'He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned,' but that verse belongs to a portion of Scripture of which the Revisers of 1881 are constrained to say: 'The two oldest Greek MSS. and some other authorities omit from ver. 9 to the end. Some other authorities have a different ending to the Gospel.' The verse Mark xvi. 16, besides, is general in its application, speaking of the Gospel as a whole, and cannot without danger be restricted to any particular forms in which its truths may be stated. It is instructive to remember in this connection that the anathemas originally attached to the Nicene Creed were afterwards omitted. Many a tender conscience might have been spared had the

Statements for  
and against.

Athanasian Creed been treated in the same way. Yet it is a rebuke to rashness to remember that there is strong feeling in favour as well as in condemnation of these clauses. On the one side, we have the opinion of Bishop Jeremy Taylor—‘It seems very hard to put uncharitableness into the Creed and so make it become an article of Faith,’ or that of Chillingworth—‘The damning clauses in St. Athanasius’ Creed are most false, and also in a high degree schismatical and presumptuous.’<sup>1</sup> On the other side, we have openly expressed admiration of the document from men with broad minds and honest hearts and the very opposite of dogmatic and tyrannous—such men as F. D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley. The former thought the clauses to which objection was taken capable of a truer interpretation.<sup>2</sup> ‘The name of the Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is, as the Fathers and Schoolmen said continually, the name of the infinite Charity, the perfect Love—the full vision of which is that beatific vision for which saints and angels long, even while they dwell in it. To lose this, to be separated from this, to be cut off from the name in which we live and move and have our being, is everlasting death.’ And Kingsley used to point out that the ‘Churchmen who composed and

<sup>1</sup> The late Dean Stanley of Westminster objected to the Creed as a whole, ‘a Creed of which most of the essential words are understood by the common people in a sense very different from their original intention’ (A. P. Stanley, *The Athanasian Creed*, 1871).—J. M.

<sup>2</sup> Allen, *Chr. Instit.*, p. 322, note, there quoted from F. D. Maurice, *Life and Letters*, ii. p. 413.

first sang this psalm believed intensely in the intermediate states of Purgatory and Paradise before the final assessment of human lives; the condemnation pronounced in the *Quicumque* is condemnation to Purgatory and not the final, irrevocable condemnation.' Kingsley also called attention to the fact that according to the *Quicumque* the final judgment upon us will be determined by our actions rather than by our opinions. It is 'they that have done good who shall go into life everlasting, they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.'

How the  
'damnatory  
clauses' may  
be dealt with.

Two methods short of mutilating the Creed have been suggested for obviating the difficulties which have been so generally felt in regard to its liturgical use. The one is that of mitigation by interpretation—the course favoured by the Ritual Commission of 1867, which suggested that a note should be appended to the Creed, 'that the condemnations in this Confession of Faith are to be no otherwise understood than as a solemn warning of the peril of those who wilfully reject the Catholic Faith.' The other method is that of a new translation, such as that proposed by Mr. Burn or Canon (now Bishop) Gore. If we render the first clause, and that in strict accordance with the true meaning of the Latin words, not 'Whosoever will be saved,' but 'Whosoever willeth to be in a state of salvation,' the harshness of the ordinary version is much modified.<sup>1</sup> The difficulty remains, however, with the

A new translation proposed.

<sup>1</sup> Burn, *Introduction*, p. 195.

second clause, 'which faith, except everyone shall have kept whole and undefiled, without doubt he will perish eternally'—which in this, its new rendering, is of as ominous import as in the old. In the Church of England this Creed is said or sung on thirteen days of the year, including all the great Church festivals, but there has been for long a widespread feeling in favour of making its use optional, as it is in the disestablished Church of Ireland.<sup>1</sup> In the Episcopal Church of the United States its use has been discontinued altogether.<sup>2</sup>

We are not concerned with defending the use of this or of any Creed belonging to one age in expressing daily or at intervals the living faith of another. It may be well that we should assign some place in our liturgies or Church services to the ancient Creeds and thus be brought into contact with those monuments of the victories of the past, and realise our oneness with our fathers in the great essentials of the Faith, many differences of form notwithstanding. But if we are studying the Symbols in the light of their own time, we should not wish a single word to be taken away or softened down.

We feel the force of Dr. Gore's eloquent words: Bishop Gore's  
defence of the  
Athanasian  
Creed.  
'The statements in the *Quicunque vult* are in fact statements of truth, unqualified no doubt as a very intellectually sensitive class would wish them qualified, but in broad simplicity and effectiveness state-

<sup>1</sup> 'The Athanasian Creed is no longer read in the Irish Church' (Professor J. P. Mahaffy, *Hibbert Journal*, 1902-3, i. 506).—J. M.

<sup>2</sup> Schaff, *History of the Creeds*, pp. 41-2.—J. M.

ments of abiding truth. And this kind of unqualified dogmatic statement is, we can easily conceive, just the kind of statement in which truth needs to be enshrined, if it is to last unimpaired through ages of wild barbarism and rough negligence, or, on the other hand, of shallow latitudinarianism and unspirituality. What do we not owe to the sharp, unmistakably emphasized language of the *Quicumque* for preserving the faith in the Blessed Trinity, one only God, through ages when idolatry was a continual peril, or through such a spiritually dead age, such a *saeculum rationalisticum*, as the eighteenth century in the English Church? What do we not owe to the *Quicumque* for preserving the faith, or shall I say, the skeleton of the faith, always ready to be re clothed in the sinews and flesh of a living devotion and inspired by the vitalising spirit of God, as by a wind that bloweth where it listeth? . . . Did not the truth need encasing in a stout armour to persist through wild days? Did it not need utterance in unmistakable tones if it was to ring on through an age utterly averse to mystery and depth? And are we not narrow-minded if we fail to rejoice in an utterance like this, because we should like it modernised and modulated to suit an over-intellectualised sensitiveness, a sensitiveness somewhat absorbed in its own difficulties and unsympathetic to the broader wants of the common man? No kind of religion more needs broadening than academic and intellectual religion. It is always forgetting how much more common are the



religious needs and perils which arise from dulness and grossness, than those which arise from a temper of intellectual scepticism. And the Church is Catholic—the mother of all sorts and conditions of men.' <sup>1</sup>

The Athanasian Creed was highly esteemed not only in the Church of the Middle Ages but in that of the Reformation. Luther wrote of it: 'This Symbol is so conceived that I do not know if since the times of the Apostles anything weightier or more glorious has been written in the Church of the New Testament.' He might have joined in Keble's Eulogy :—

Its use by the Reformers.

'Seek we some realm where virgin souls may pray,  
In faith untarnished by the sophist's scorn,  
And duly raise on each diviner morn  
The psalm that gathers in one glorious lay  
All chants that e'er from heaven to earth found way?  
Majestic march! as meet to guide and time  
Man's wandering path in life's ungenial clime,  
As Aaron's trump for the dread Ark's array.  
Creed of the Saints, and Anthem of the Blest,  
And calm-breathed warning of the kindest love  
That ever heaved a wakeful mother's breast  
(True love is bold, and gravely dares reprove),  
Who knows but myriads owe their endless rest  
To thy recalling, tempted else to rove?'

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<sup>1</sup> *The Athanasian Creed*, by Chas. Gore, M.A., D.D. (Oxford House Papers, xxii.), 1897, pp. 23-4.

## CHAPTER V

### COMPARISON OF ANCIENT CREEDS

#### I

THE three Symbolical Documents which we have now passed under review—The Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds—are usually classed together as *oecumenical*, or belonging to the whole Church, and it is not a little remarkable that neither this general description nor the names by which they are individually known are strictly applicable. We have seen that the Apostles' Creed cannot be shown to have any direct connection with the apostles, and is only apostolic in that it reflects to so great a degree the teaching of the apostolic Church. Not only so, but the expression *Symbolum Apostolicum* was for some time used to denote Creeds generally, and not a particular formulary, and is occasionally used, not for our Apostles', but for our Nicene Creed. The latter again differs in many respects, notably in size and comprehensiveness, from that formally adopted at the Council of Nicaea, and it is even doubtful, as we have seen, if it is entitled to the designation Niceno-Constantinopolitan which for two centuries and a half has been in use as a more correct title. Least of all has the Athanasian Creed any right to be associated

They are  
(1) neither  
strictly  
oecumenical,  
(2) nor what  
their names  
severally  
declare.

with the name of Athanasius, except again in so far as it reflects the doctrine of the great Church Father, for which he struggled so strenuously. As to their oecumenical character, this may be allowed to them in so far that the doctrines which they represent in common are practically acknowledged by almost every Christian Church ; in so far also as they were the outcome of the faith and labour of the yet undivided Church. They preceded by hundreds of years not only the great cleavage caused by the Reformation, but also the prior separation of Eastern and Western Christendom. But of the three, the Nicene is the only one which can claim to be truly oecumenical. It was the only one that ever received the formal sanction of a Council of the Church. But though in the East it is known as *the* Symbol and is regarded with almost superstitious reverence, in the West, while it is acknowledged and honoured and especially associated with the Communion Office, it has never displaced in popular esteem the peculiarly Western product which we have in the Apostles' Creed.<sup>1</sup> The latter has never been acknowledged in the East, and has even from time to time been expressly disowned by official representatives of the Eastern Church. The same fate has befallen

The Apostles' Creed never acknowledged in the East.

<sup>1</sup> This is the case with respect to 'popular esteem,' but it may be noted that the Nicene Creed is quoted in full in the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, 4th Feb. 1546, and is described as 'the Symbol of faith which the holy Roman Church makes use of—as being that principle wherein all who profess the faith of Christ necessarily agree.' In the *Profession of the Tridentine Faith*, 1564, it is again described as 'the creed which the holy Roman Church makes use of.'—J. M.

the Athanasian Symbol, which is a characteristically Western product, and was not known in the East until after A.D. 1000. Further, it has to be remembered that the Nicene Creed itself, as chanted in the liturgies of East and West, differs in respect of the *Filioque* clause, to which the Western liturgies cling as tenaciously as the Eastern persist in rejecting it.

Differences between Eastern and Western types—  
Eastern, 'We believe';  
Western, 'I believe.'

If now we compare these Creeds with each other, we perceive notable differences even in point of form between the Eastern and Western types. The former are always expressed in the plural number, probably as being the joint utterance of a council; while the latter, in the singular 'I believe,' recall the fact that they originally expressed the faith of an individual at his baptism. In the East the word 'one' was inserted before 'God the Father Almighty'; and after 'Maker of Heaven and Earth' were inserted the words 'and of all things visible and invisible,' the necessity for this springing doubtless from the Gnostic and Dualistic doctrine that evil was inseparable from matter, of which therefore God could not be the creator. No Eastern Creed contains the clause concerning the descent into hell, and no Western creed the clause, 'Whose kingdom shall have no end.' The Eastern type did not adopt the article concerning the communion of saints, nor the Western the mention of 'one baptism' in connection with the forgiveness of sins. The former gives reasons for the facts stated—as in the clauses,

Omissions in Eastern Creeds—  
(1) 'He descended into hell';

(2) 'the communion of saints.'

'Who *for us men and for our salvation* came,'  
'crucified also *for us*,' 'rose again *according to the*  
*Scriptures*,' which are omitted in the latter.

Both Eastern and Western types, however, follow as a rule the ground-plan of the baptismal formula, and their great divisions are successively concerned with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They move within the circle of scriptural ideas, and even are mainly occupied with scriptural facts, though both the Nicene and the Athanasian attempt explanation of the facts, or at least repudiation of false explanations of them. In general they adhere to scriptural language, the Nicene being the first to introduce a term (*homousios*) which was not found in Scripture, though it was held to summarise many scriptural statements. They are alike too in their omissions, in the fields of doctrine which they leave untouched, as we see most clearly when we compare them with the Confessions of post-Reformation times. 'They are,' it has been said, 'a profession of faith in the only true and living God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, who made us, redeemed us, and sanctifies us. They follow the order of God's own revelation, beginning with God and the creation, and ending with the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. They set forth the articles of faith in the form of facts rather than dogmas, and are well suited, especially the Apostles' Creed, for catechetical and liturgical use.'<sup>1</sup>

Correspondences—  
(1) Both types have the ground-plan: Father, Son, Holy Spirit.

(2) Both move within scriptural ideas.

The Nicene introduces a non-scriptural term—  
*homousios*.

<sup>1</sup> Schaff, *Creeds*, i. 13.

## II. THE DEFINITION OF FAITH OF THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON, A.D. 451

Before passing from these ancient Creeds, it is desirable to notice two documents not strictly classed as creeds but of a supplementary and illustrative character, and not unworthy to be associated with those of which we have already spoken. Something also ought to be said regarding the terminology introduced into the discussion of the subjects which engaged the attention of theologians especially in the fourth century.

The two documents referred to are the Definition of Faith of the Council of Chalcedon and the hymn known as the *Te Deum*.

We have seen how the enlarged Nicene Creed was accepted by the Council at Chalcedon as having been already sanctioned at Constantinople, but the Council had work of its own to do. No sooner was the question settled as to the divinity of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit and their relation to the Father in the Trinity, than there emerged

Relation of the  
divine and  
human natures  
in Christ.

a corresponding question as to the relation of the divine and human natures in Jesus Christ Himself. There had been those in the earliest times who held that He was man and nothing more than man, as well as those who held that His humanity was an illusion and that He was simply a manifestation of and an emanation from God. Neither of these extreme opinions being found satisfactory or sufficient to sustain the weight of the facts to be explained,

various intermediate hypotheses were in the course of time advanced. Of these, four had appeared before the Council of Chalcedon in 451. Four hypotheses had been advanced.

There were the followers of Arius and Apollinaris who agreed in ascribing to our Lord only a mutilated human nature, not one consisting of body, soul, and spirit, but of body only, or body and soul, the divine element in Him taking the place of the rest. (1) Arius' and Apollinaris'—An incomplete humanity: Christ=body, soul (psyche), and the divine Logos.

Then came Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, who in his anxiety to maintain intact the true manhood of Christ was led to the assertion that in Him were two persons—the man Christ Jesus and the Son of God, most closely associated but not identified. Nestorius, it was said, had been particularly offended by the common application of the term *theotokos*, or 'mother of God,' to the Virgin Mary. She was the mother of Christ, he said, of the human nature with which the Divinity was associated, but not of the Son of God. The dilemma, it is obvious, was a very difficult one; for while the reasonableness of the contention was from one point of view apparent—it seemed irreverent to speak of the mother of God—yet from another it seemed tantamount to a denial of Christ's deity. (3) Nestorius'—In Christ were two persons.

A reaction from Nestorianism was inevitable. As Nestorius had laid so much stress upon the diversity of the natures in Christ as to represent them as the combination in one man of two persons, so Eutyches, the abbot of a Constantinopolitan monastery, in order to preserve unity of person, gave up the distinction of the divine and human (4) Eutyches'—One nature only, the divine, the human being absorbed in the divine.

natures in Christ, holding that the human was absorbed by the divine as a drop of wine would be absorbed by the ocean.

Nestorianism was condemned at Ephesus in 431 ; but both the opposing heresies were dealt with at Chalcedon twenty years later in the Definition of which we have spoken, and which has fixed the orthodox form of belief in regard to the person of Christ for all succeeding ages. In the fifth book of his *Ecclesiastical Polity*,<sup>1</sup> the judicious Hooker has with marvellous brevity and point chronicled the result of the long discussion : ‘ There are but four things which concur to make complete the whole state of our Lord Jesus Christ : his deity, his manhood, the conjunction of both, and the distinction of the one from the other being joined in one. Four principal heresies there are which have in those things withstood the truth : Arians by bending themselves against the deity of Christ ; Apollinarians by maiming and misinterpreting what belongeth to his human nature ; Nestorians by rending Christ asunder and dividing him into two persons ; the followers of Eutyches by confounding in his person those natures which they should distinguish. Against these there have been four most famous ancient general councils : the council of Nice to define against Arians, against Apollinarians the council of Constantinople, the council of Ephesus against Nestorians, against Eutychians the Chalcedon council. In four words, ἀληθῶς, τελέως,

Hooker's summing up regarding the Deity and the humanity of Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Hooker, *Eccles. Polity*, v. liv. 10.



ἀδιαίρετως, ἀσυγχύτως, *truly, perfectly, indivisibly, distinctly*, the first applied to his being God, the second to his being Man, the third to his being of both One, and the fourth to his still continuing in that one Both, we may fully, by way of abridgment, comprise whatsoever antiquity hath at large handled either in declaration of Christian belief, or in refutation of the aforesaid heresies.’<sup>1</sup>

The second part of the Athanasian Creed deals also with this subject and asserts in the clearest terms that Christ is ‘perfect God and perfect man,’ though, as we said, one argument for its being dated not later than 430 is the absence of such a condemnation of the Nestorian position as might have been looked for after that date.

### III. THE ‘TE DEUM’

If a Creed has often been compared to a skeleton, with the design of implying that it is equally lifeless, I think we may speak of the *Te Deum* as a Creed with flesh and blood. It is not theology merely, it is religion. It thrills and pulses with emotion. It is the most glorious of all the hymns of the Church. And yet when we come to examine carefully the *Te Deum* and the Athanasian Creed, we find that the skeleton of each is practically the same, only in one case elaborated with touches designed to illus-

A Creed, but pulsing with religious feeling.

<sup>1</sup> The quartet of definitive terms as given in the Definition of Faith of the Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451, is: ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαίρετως, ἀχωρίστως, *distinctly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably*.—J. M.

trate and give an emotional turn to the fundamental truths set forth, in the other, elaborated with careful definition for their acceptance and defence. 'The Father, of an infinite majesty; Thine honourable true and only Son; also the Holy Ghost the Comforter'—these words imply all that is found in expanded form in the first part of the Creed. Similarly—'Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father. When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man, thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb—When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers—Thou sittest at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father—We believe that thou shalt come to be our judge'—these words convey all that is implied in the second part of the Creed. We may fully admit the different impressions which the two treatments make upon us, but it is impossible to accept the one and repudiate the other. The one commends to the heart what the other adapts to the intellect. And both have been generally ascribed to the Church of Gaul 'which had a special gift for full-toned and worthy liturgical language,'<sup>1</sup> though it is only fair to say that the latest view regards Niceta of Remesiana, a Dacian bishop, as the author of the *Te Deum*. But the relation of the two reminds us that religious faith must have its skeleton of thought as well as its flesh and blood of emotion. Without the former the latter would be weak and evanescent, without the latter the former

Most probable  
author, Niceta  
of Remesiana.

<sup>1</sup> Burn, *Introduction*, pp. 256-79.

would be shorn of its beauty and attractiveness. So the solemnities of Christian worship and the melodies of Christian hymns have always supplemented the abstractions of Christian theology, and translated them into forms fitted to inspire and guide the life of men. So the technicalities and speculations of Thomas Aquinas live and move in the pages of Dante. So the grim theories of Puritanism seem to take on another form and speak with another tongue in the poems of Milton and the immortal allegories of John Bunyan. 'Christian metaphysic,' it has been truly said, 'is no more an end in itself than is the analysis of good drinking water. By itself it leaves us thirsty.' But it is no less true that if we wish to know what water is good for drinking, we judge by the analysis rather than by the taste. And in comparing the streams proceeding from different sources, it is again by the analysis that we judge. The analysis is the safer criterion. To make use again of the fine figure of Dr. Burn, *Te Deum* and Athanasian Creed are but 'the description and analysis of the same river of the water of life, flowing on from age to age, an inexhaustible refreshing stream, freely offered to the thirsty souls of men.'<sup>1</sup>

The inter-  
dependence of  
Hymns and  
Creeds.

#### IV. THE TECHNICAL TERMS EMPLOYED IN THE CREEDS

Some notice of the technical terms employed in the ancient Creeds is desirable in order to illustrate

<sup>1</sup> Burn, *Introduction*, p. 7.

from another point of view the tentative, necessarily imperfect, character of all such compositions. 'Theological science,' it has been truly remarked, 'like any other, has to make its way slowly and forge its definitions as best it can, hindered by the limited resources of human language.' The Creeds themselves are great definitions, and collections of definitions. But the tendency is, when once the formula has been constructed and has passed into use, to attribute to it an exactness and completeness, of the want of which those were most conscious who were at the making of it. It is forgotten that the term selected was only the best available to express the meaning, without always being absolutely equal to the task laid upon it. It is not asked what the terms meant at the time of their introduction. The usual or modern meaning is attributed to them, and it is assumed that those who first made use of them meant all that is thus conveyed. And so misunderstandings grow up, and difficulties are felt which would be obviated by more careful inquiry. Only one or two examples can be presented here by way of illustrating a subject which is extremely intricate as well as difficult.

They are not always adequate: they were only the best available.

Their contemporary sense should be sought.

'Person' and 'Substance.'

The Westminster Shorter Catechism, for example, in Question 6 correctly states the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity thus: 'There are three Persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.'

Here we have the One and the Three, and the terms substance and person, exactly as they appear in the Nicene, and more clearly still, in the Athanasian Creed. But do we understand them in the same sense as did the authors of these earlier documents, and does the history of the terms enable us to see how far they were intended to interpret for us the mystery of the Divine Being? It is not too much to say that we meet in these documents with a hesitation, a groping after adequate expression, a careful treading among the many difficulties of the path, which we are far from associating with the dogmatic—even as they seem to us sometimes, audacious—leaders of the early Church. We see mistakes and misunderstandings arising from the absence of suitable terminology, and when at length a form of words has been adopted, this is done with a full sense of its inadequacy.

‘One substance,’ ‘three persons’—the word *substance* is obviously used to denote that which is common to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, while *person* denotes that which is distinctive of each.<sup>1</sup> So we might say that our personality distinguishes us from other men, that our substance, humanity, is that which we have in common with them. But personality with us is not only distinctive but distinct, it is that which is most strictly individual and peculiar, which cannot be transferred or shared. To speak of three persons in the Godhead in this modern sense of person, as though each were related

‘Substance’  
then meant  
what was  
common to  
several:  
‘person,’  
what was  
distinctive.

<sup>1</sup> See also chap. iii. pp. 86-7 and note.

to Divinity as a man to humanity, would obviously result in breaking up the unity of the Godhead, or would reduce the doctrine of the trinity to an arithmetical puzzle, a form of words to which no possible meaning could be attached. One in three, three in one—how often the apparent paradox has been repeated in bewilderment or in ridicule!

In the West the unity in the Trinity: in the East the 'personal' distinctions were emphasised.

No doubt the thoughts of men have instinctively laid stress upon one or other element in their conception of the Divine nature, upon the common or upon the distinctive. In the West the tendency has always been to emphasise the unity of God, and make the 'personal' distinctions subordinate. In the East, the emphasis was laid upon the distinctions, grounded upon the threefold work of God in creation, in history, and in the soul of man, and the difficulty is allowed to rest in the way in which these 'personal' distinctions are to be reconciled with the Divine unity. The consequence was that the Greek word *hypostasis* and the Latin word *substantia*—which are etymologically equivalent, both meaning that which stands under or underlies phenomena—came to be used for that which in each case was regarded as most real—*substantia* for the unity in the West, and *hypostasis* for the distinctive element in the East. The confusion thereupon resulting may be readily conceived. Unfortunately the Latins had not the word *essentia*, which would have been the literal rendering of the Greek *ousia*, and so used *substantia* for it. Even before the Nicene contro-

*Substantia* and *hypostasis* (person) are etymologically synonymous, = what underlies phenomena.

versy, in the West *substantia* and *ousia* had been regarded as equivalents.<sup>1</sup> In the East, on the other hand, at the time of the Nicene controversy, we have seen that the Greeks used *hypostasis*, that is *substance*, either as an equivalent of *ousia* or for what was afterwards known as *person*. For the idea of 'personality' as applied to the Divine, it has been noted, 'Athanasius had no word; *πρόσωπον* (which came to be used for person) meant too little, implying as it did no more than an aspect possibly worn but for a special period or purpose—*ὑπόστασις*, implying such personality as separates Peter from Paul, too much.' At the Synod of Alexandria in 362, presided over by Athanasius, it was found that some spoke of one hypostasis, others of three hypostases, but that both parties agreed in the Nicene doctrine of One God permanently existing in three eternal modes. Thereafter *hypostasis* seems to have passed away from its function as a synonym of *ousia* and an equivalent of *substantia*, and to become the equivalent of *persona*. 'The truth is that the word person, in reference to a human individual, has not the same meaning as when referred to the Divine Being; nor does "personality" carry the same significance, when applied to the Divine nature as a whole, as when applied severally to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.' In the latter case 'it is used to denote a distinction that is greater than that of mere attributes or relations, but less than that of

History of  
their technical  
significations.

<sup>1</sup> Bethune-Baker, *Meaning of Homoousios*, p. 66.

The 'Three  
Persons' in  
the New  
Testament.

different gods, a relation which we cannot positively describe or conceive further than this, that it admits the use of personal pronouns by Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, of and to each other, while yet they are one, not only in counsel and will and in origin, but in nature and essence.'<sup>1</sup> The fluctuation in the use of such terms shows clearly that their unsatisfactory character was felt from the first. They are often subjected to severe criticism, and it has even been suggested that they should be superseded by others. But besides the difficulty of getting others less open to objection, 'they have been sanctioned by such long usage that it is now impossible to replace them. . . . the wise course therefore seems to be to use such words with a careful recognition of the extent to which they are applicable.'

<sup>1</sup> 'The Scriptural facts are : (a) The Father says *I* : the Son says *I* : the Spirit says *I*. (b) The Father says *Thou* to the Son : the Son says *Thou* to the Father : and in like manner, the Father and the Son use the pronouns *He* and *Him* in reference to the Spirit. (c) The Father loves the Son : the Son loves the Father : the Spirit testifies of the Son. . . . The summation of these and kindred facts is expressed in the proposition : The one Divine Being subsists in Three Persons—Father, Son and Spirit' (Hodge, *Systematic Theology* : quoted in *Commentary on the Shorter Catechism*, by Rev. Alex. Whyte, D.D.).—J. M.



## CHAPTER VI

### CREEDS OF THE GREEK CHURCH

FROM one point of view a consideration of the Creeds of the Greek and Roman Churches should succeed rather than precede that of the symbolical position of the Churches of the Reformation. For the Council of Trent, 1545-63, which for the first time formulated in a complete and systematic way the doctrinal position of the Church of Rome, was held after the Reformation, and represents the wave of reaction which could not but follow upon that historic movement. The expositions of Greek Catholicism which may be regarded as authoritative are in like manner all post-Reformation documents. But though thus impelled to define their attitude to the great questions of theology by the rise of Christian communities which questioned and rejected their teaching, these Churches had their roots in that past we have been contemplating, and have carried forward its spirit in an intensified and even irreconcilable form down to the present day. It is better therefore to consider them in connection with the ancient world to which they really belong than with the modern world with which they have so little in common.

The definitive Creeds of the Greek and Roman Churches are post-Reformation.

Further, while it is necessary, in order to complete

our survey of the chief confessional positions held by the several Churches, to give a short account of those of the Greek and Roman Churches, they have a less direct bearing upon the general purpose which we have at present in view, namely, to exhibit the nature and illustrate the value and use of Creeds and the importance to be attached to them. For this main purpose we might have confined ourselves to the Creeds of the ancient Church and to the Confessions of the Reformation and the period subsequent to it. It seems desirable, however, to give some account of these final utterances of two great Communion before proceeding to the consideration of lines of development which touch more nearly upon ourselves.

#### I. THE CHARACTER AND STANDARDS OF THE GREEK CHURCH

Official  
designation of  
the Greek  
Church.

‘The Holy Oriental Orthodox Catholic Apostolic Church,’ which is the full title of the prevailing form of Eastern Christianity, includes several national Churches, such as the Greek and the Russian, having each its own peculiarities of organisation. It is also locally associated with, though ecclesiastically estranged from, several other Eastern Churches, such as the Nestorian and the Monophysite, descended from those heretical sects of the early centuries, to which reference has already been made. These last have been described as ‘petrified chapters of Church history,’ but indeed the whole

Eastern Church might be so designated. In splendid isolation, with an immobility which is paralysing, although with a dignity which is venerable, it rules the spiritual destinies of between eighty and ninety millions of the human race.

The Eastern, often referred to simply as the Greek Church, is the oldest Church in Christendom and occupies the scenes of the first struggles and triumphs of the Christian faith. In the ninth century the rivalry between the bishops of Old and New Rome (as Constantinople was often called) came to a head, and two centuries later the estrangement between the Greek and Roman Churches was complete. Many attempts have been made to bring them together again, but without success. No two Churches perhaps resemble each other more, yet none are so irreconcilable in their antagonism. Since the separation, the course of the Eastern Church has been practically untouched by Western movements whether of thought or political development. It has indeed had long periods of stagnation. 'It has no Middle Ages. It has no Renaissance, it has no Reformation. It has given birth to no great universities and schools of learning. It has no Protestantism. It remains,' as has been remarked, 'very much as the fourth and fifth centuries left it, like an ancient tree of the forest, which has grown up in some sequestered spot sheltered from the storm, incrustated with moss and lichen, and hoary with age.'<sup>1</sup>

Cause of the separation of the Greek and Roman Churches.

The Eastern has been unprogressive.

<sup>1</sup> *The Churches of Christendom* (St. Giles Lectures, 1884), p. 116.

It is character-  
ised by impres-  
sive ritual and  
the devotion of  
its adherents.

Those who know the Greek Church from personal contact and observation, speak not only of its impressive ritual, its splendid temples, the devotion of its adherents, the crowds of excited worshippers who throng its churches, or the pilgrims who frequent its shrines, of the simple piety often found among its people, and the earnestness and sanctity of many of its clergy—but also of its general deadness and externality, and its failure to elevate the moral life of those belonging to it. Efforts have been made from time to time to quicken its spiritual life, but they have been occasional and evanescent. ‘Measured by their outward devotions, their fasts, their pilgrimages, and their respect for the ceremonies of their Church, the populations of Russia and Greece are the most religious in the world. Measured by the standard of the life, the estimate must be a far lower one, even in the judgment of the most charitable observer.’<sup>1</sup>

Its doctrinal  
basis—the  
decrees of the  
first seven  
General  
Councils.

The doctrinal position of the Greek Church rests upon the decrees of the first seven oecumenical Councils, which had all been summoned by Greek emperors and controlled by Greek patriarchs and bishops. The chief subjects of their decisions may be briefly indicated. The first Council, which met at Nicaea in 325, dealt, as we saw in a previous chapter, with the Arian heresy; the second, at Constantinople in 381, with the Macedonian heresy (which questioned the Divinity of the Holy Ghost); the third, at Ephesus in 431, with Nestorianism

<sup>1</sup> *The Churches of Christendom*, ut supra, p. 144.

and Pelagianism ; the fourth, at Chalcedon in 451, with Nestorianism and the Eutychian or Monophysite heresy. These four councils are the most important, but to them fall to be added the Second Council of Constantinople in 553, which confirmed and completed the work of the third and fourth General Councils ; the Third Council of Constantinople in 680, which condemned the Monothelites or those who taught that Christ had only one Will, a peculiar form of the Monophysite heresy ; and lastly, the Second Council of Nicaea in 787, which sanctioned the devotional use of images as distinguished from the worship of them.

Pre-eminent in authority among all these is the first Council of Nicaea, whose Creed is for the Greeks *the Symbolum*, the form in which it is used being of course without the disputed *Filioque* clause. The Church looks forward, it is said, to an eighth oecumenical Council which is to settle all the controversies of Christendom subsequent to the great schism between East and West.

The Nicene Creed without the *Filioque* clause is *the Symbolum*.

From the time of the last Council mentioned—from the end, that is, of the eighth century—the doctrinal basis of the Eastern Church has remained unchanged. With the establishment of Mohammedan supremacy in the countries which it had formerly ruled in spiritual matters, all life seems to have gone out of it. It lives in the memory of its former glory. It consecrates the past and has no outlook upon the future. Its last significant intellectual product was the work of John of Damascus, who died about

After the Mohammedan supremacy, the Eastern Church's spiritual life decayed.

Its last great theologian, John of Damascus, eighth century.

754, and who embodied the dogmas of the Greek Church in a systematic, philosophical, and theological work, which, besides summing up what had already been done by that Church, helped to lay the foundations of mediaeval scholasticism.<sup>1</sup> The Reformation, as we have said, did not directly affect the Greek Church. After the Reformation, it was not unnatural perhaps that the Church of Rome should, through the instrumentality of the Jesuits, renew the attempts formerly made to bring about a reunion with that of the East, nor, on the other hand, that the Protestants, in their struggle with the might of Rome, should look to Rome's age-long foe as a possible source of help. The only result of these attempts at *rapprochement*, like that of similar movements in our own day, was to draw forth from the Oriental Church a fresh declaration of its immobility, and somewhat clearer and more definite expositions of its full doctrinal position. Of these it is only needful to mention three.

Modern re-statements of its doctrine.

(1) Confession of Peter Mogilas, approved 1643 and 1672.

(1) The first is the Orthodox Confession of Peter Mogilas, composed about the year 1640. Its occasion was as follows. In the year 1576, the Patriarch Jeremiah II. of Constantinople had sent 'Answers' to two theological professors of Tübingen, who had approached him under the impression that there was a radical similarity between the Lutheran Doctrines and those of the older Communion. Then, about half a century later, Cyril Lucar, Patriarch of Constantinople, who had studied and

<sup>1</sup> Sohm, *Ch. History*, p. 77.

travelled extensively in Europe, had attempted to ingraft some of the Western doctrinal teaching, particularly of the Reformed Churches, upon the old oecumenical Creeds of his own Church. Further, the Jesuits, under the protection of the French ambassadors in Constantinople, had been striving to substitute the authority and polity of Rome for that of the Church of the East. Mogilas was Metropolitan of Kieff, and his Confession, approved in 1643 as 'the orthodox confession of the catholic and apostolic church,' defines the faith over against both the Roman Catholic and the Protestant doctrines. It consists of a Catechism in three parts, the first entitled *Faith*, being an exposition of the Nicene Creed; the Second, *Hope*, based upon the Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes; and the third, *Love*, under which are explained the different kinds of virtues and sins, and also the Ten Commandments. The Confession of Mogilas was approved by Synods held in 1643 and 1672, and has ever since been regarded as the Creed of the entire Greek and Russian Church.

(2) The second of the three Confessions of primary importance in the Greek Church is that of Dositheus, <sup>(2) Confession of Dositheus, adopted 1672.</sup> which was adopted at a Synod held at Jerusalem in 1672. This Synod has been compared in position and importance to the Council of Trent—since 'both fixed the doctrinal status of the Churches they represented, and both condemned the evangelical doctrines of Protestantism.'<sup>1</sup> The Confession of

<sup>1</sup> Schaff, *History of the Creeds*, p. 61.

Dositheus was especially intended to answer and refute the Calvinism of Cyril Lucar, and its eighteen articles follow the order of those in the Confession or Manifesto of the latter. Lucar's name is interesting to us as that of the prelate who presented to our King Charles I. the Codex Alexandrinus, one of the most ancient Greek manuscripts of the Bible, which to this day is one of the treasures of the British Museum.

(3) Longer  
Catechism of  
Philaret,  
adopted 1839.

(3) The third document referred to is the longer Russian Catechism of Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, which was adopted by the Holy Synod of St. Petersburg in 1839, was published in all the languages of Russia, and gives the most complete accessible account of the Graeco-Russian orthodoxy of the present day. Philaret represented, it has been said, 'in learning, eloquence, and ascetic piety, the best phase of the Russian State Church in the nineteenth century.' His Catechism follows in general the same plan as the Confession of Mogilas, the order, namely, of the three cardinal virtues—Faith, Hope and Love.

## II. DOCTRINAL POSITION OF THE EASTERN CHURCH

It only remains to give a brief synopsis of the doctrinal positions represented by these formulas, so far at least as may serve for a comparison with those of the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches.

According to these standards, the knowledge of



the truths of Christianity is derived from a twofold source—Scripture and Tradition—the latter having been preserved from error and corruption by the influence of the Holy Spirit, so that it cannot deceive or be deceived. Every believer may read the Scripture, though this is not encouraged, particularly as to certain portions of it, and the interpretation of Scripture belongs to the Church alone, which is taught by the Holy Ghost through prophets, apostles, holy fathers and synods, and therefore cannot err, or choose a lie for the truth. No infallible pope, however, is acknowledged as determining the belief of the Church. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is held in common with Western Christendom, except of course the procession of the Spirit from the Son as well as from the Father. Besides the triune God, there is no other object of divine *worship*, but homage may be paid to the Virgin Mary, and reverence to the saints and to their pictures and relics. Man, when created, possessed immortality, perfect wisdom, and a will regulated by reason. As a result of the first sin, Adam and his posterity lost spiritual light and happiness, and the will received a bias towards evil. But though labouring under this inherited sinfulness, man has not lost his intellectual and moral nature, has still some power of will towards good, and is not always doing evil. Christ, by His vicarious death, has made satisfaction to God for the world's sins, and this satisfaction was perfectly commensurate with the sins for which it atoned.

Tradition and Scripture both recognised as sources.

The 'double procession' not accepted.

Homage, not worship, to the Virgin Mary.

Christ's vicarious death.

Saints, angels, the Virgin bring our petitions before Christ the Mediator. Christ is the only mediator and advocate with God, but the saints and angels, as well as the Mother of our Lord, bring our petitions before Him and give them greater effect. Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit. Saving help is offered to all men without distinction, and may be rejected. No one can be saved without faith, which is a certain persuasion, and works by love. The justified man can do no more than keep the commandments of God (there can be, that is, no works of supererogation) and may fall from a state of grace through mortal sin. Good works done without faith cannot contribute to our salvation.

Christ rules over the Church through an unbroken succession of bishops.

The Holy Oriental Catholic and Apostolic Church comprehends all true believers in Christ, and it is governed by Christ through duly ordained bishops in unbroken succession. Members of the Church are all the faithful who firmly hold the faith of Christ as delivered by Him through the Apostles and the Holy Synods, although some may be subject to various sins. Like the Roman Church, the Greek Church counts seven Sacraments or Mysteries. These under visible signs communicate God's invisible grace to Christians, when administered with intention. Baptism entirely destroys original sin, remits previous actual sin, and secures the gift of the Holy Ghost. Sins committed after baptism must be remitted by priestly absolution after repentance and confession. In the Eucharist the true body and blood of Christ are substantially present, and the elements are changed into the

Seven Sacraments.

Benefits acquired by baptism.

Priestly absolution.

The 'real presence.'

substance of Christ, whose body and blood are corporeally partaken of by communicants. All Christians receive both elements, not, as in the Roman Church, the bread only. The Eucharist is also an expiatory sacrifice, offered to God by the hands of the priest on behalf of all the faithful, whether living or dead, and is received by the hand and mouth of unworthy as well as worthy communicants, though with opposite effects in each case. Outside of the visible Church as above defined there is no salvation. After death the souls of men are either at rest or in torment, according to their condition in this life, but their condition will not be perfect until the resurrection of the body.

Both 'elements' given.

Outside the visible Church no salvation.

The souls of those who die in a state of penitence, without having brought forth the fruits of repentance, depart into Hades, where they suffer the punishment for their sins ; but they may be delivered by the prayers of the priests and the alms of their kindred, especially by the unbloody sacrifice of the Mass which individuals offer for their departed relatives, and which the Catholic and Apostolic Church daily offers for all alike. The liberation from this intervening state of purification will take place before the resurrection and the general judgment, but the time is unknown. This is essentially the Romish doctrine of purgatory, though the term itself is avoided, and nothing is said of material or physical torments.

A purgatory.

It has been remarked that 'the doctrinal system of the Eastern Church,' of which the above is an

The doctrines  
of the Eastern  
Church not so  
fully developed  
as those of the  
Roman.

outline, 'has not been so fully developed, so definitely stated, or so philosophically treated as that of the Church of Rome; it is full of metaphysical and subtle distinctions, and it is probably this want of definiteness that has led many to regard it with greater favour and hopefulness than they regard the dogmas and practices of the Church of Rome.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Churches of Christendom*, ut supra, p. 125.

## CHAPTER VII

### CREEDS OF THE CHURCH OF ROME

#### I. HER DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

‘THE horizon of mediaeval Church history,’ it has been said, ‘is no longer that of Christendom ; it is only the horizon of the West.’<sup>1</sup> In the early Middle Ages the great severance between East and West took place. The touch of Islam petrified Eastern Christendom ; Arabian culture superseded and overshadowed that of Greece ; the influx of the Sclavonic races brought no new life to the Greek nation or the Greek Church ; the sceptre passed into the hands of the Latin, and through them into those of the Teutonic races. ‘It was well that the severance had taken place, and that in the struggle with the difficulties which surrounded the Western Church she was no longer hampered by the dead weight of Eastern Christendom. The Roman Empire fell before the inroads of the northern barbarians, but the Roman Church, like a stately vessel, rode the wave and was not, like its Eastern rival, submerged beneath it.’<sup>2</sup> ‘It rescued its organisation, its traditions, and its faith from the ancient world, and delivered them to the new age. . . . The Church was saved and culture was saved with her.’ And

The Western Church did not decay with the political decline of Rome.

<sup>1</sup> Sohm, *Ch. History*, p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 78-9.

for centuries the Church of Rome filled the world with her activities, her ambitions, her achievements, until she fell from her pinnacle of greatness through the corruption fostered by her own success.

Official  
designation of  
the Roman  
Church.

In the eyes of the Church of Rome the Eastern Church is schismatical only, while Protestantism is both schismatical and heretical. She herself claims the title of the 'Holy Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church'—Roman, because the centre and crown of her organisation is the Papacy enthroned in the Eternal City.

Like the Greek Church, that of Rome has its doctrinal foundation in the remote past while the full authoritative expositions of its system are modern.

Her doctrinal  
standards.

It acknowledges the three 'oecumenical' Creeds, the dogmatic decisions of the oecumenical Councils [of which it numbers twenty, from that of Nicaea in 325 to the Vatican Council of 1870], also the bulls of the popes.<sup>1</sup> Its principal authorities, however, are the canons and decrees of the Council of Trent, the Profession of the Tridentine Faith, commonly called the Creed of Pius IV., the Roman Catechism,<sup>2</sup> the decree declaring the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, and the Vatican decrees declaring the Catholic Faith and the Infallibility of the Pope. With the last two may be taken, as a sort of negative symbol, denouncing error rather than expounding truth, the Syllabus of Pope Pius IX., who has been not unjustly described as arraying the Papacy in open war against modern civilisation and civil and

<sup>1</sup> Schaff-Herzog, *Encyclopaedia*, iii. 2059.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix E.

religious freedom.<sup>1</sup> The effect of this development seems likely to be the reduction of the Roman system to that condition of petrification which has been the reproach of the Eastern Church. For to Rome there is left no place of repentance. Change, if it be of the nature of correction or improvement, is impossible to her. 'A question once settled by infallible authority is settled for ever, and cannot be reopened. But the same authority may add new dogmas,'<sup>2</sup> and thus place new fetters upon reason and conscience. For what was, before definition, an open question or a pious opinion, becomes, after it, an incontrovertible article of belief. Given a sufficient number of such definitions, and it is evident that the demands upon the faith of the Church must form a serious barrier to its progress.<sup>3</sup>

Papal 'infallibility' and further evolution of doctrine.

<sup>1</sup> Schaff-Herzog, *Encyclopaedia*, iii. 2061.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iii. 2089.

<sup>3</sup> Definition of Papal Infallibility given by Vatican Council of 1869-70 : 'The Vatican Council teaches "that when the Roman Pontiff speaks *ex cathedra*—that is, when he, using his office as pastor and doctor of all Christians, in virtue of his Apostolic office, defines a doctrine of faith and morals to be held by the whole Church, he by the divine assistance promised to him in the blessed Peter, possesses that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer was pleased to invest his Church in the definition of doctrine on faith or morals, and that, therefore, such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable in their own nature and not because of the consent of the Church" ["Pastor Aeternus," cap. 4]. The Pope in himself is subject to error like other men ; his infallibility comes from the Spirit of God, which on certain occasions protects him from error in faith and morals. He has no infallibility in merely historical or scientific questions. Even in matters of faith and morals he has no inspiration, and must use the same means of theological inquiry open to other men. He may err as a private doctor ; nor is any immunity from error granted to books which he may write and publish. Even when he speaks with Apostolic authority he may err. The Vatican Council only requires us to believe that God protects him from error in definitions on faith or morals when he imposes a belief on the Universal Church' (*Catholic Dictionary*, Article 'Pope').—J. M.

From the time of the last of the oecumenical Creeds to the middle of the sixteenth century, the faith of the Western Church found no formal expression. In one sense it did not need such expression. The Church itself was the living Creed of Christendom, teaching its doctrine, enforcing its discipline, establishing and extending its authority. But with the rise of Protestantism the situation was changed. The manifestos put forth by the various Lutheran and Reformed communities required a counter-statement. The spirit of reform was abroad, and there were many who did not desire to separate themselves from the Roman Communion who yet sincerely denounced her abuses and sought to remove them. The celebrated Council of Trent, which met in the Austrian city of that name, lasted, with long interruptions, from December 1545 to December 1563. The story of its eighteen years' deliberations, of the intrigues which surrounded it, of the obstacles which were thrown in its way, and of its outcome and results, has been told in his own vivid English by Mr. Froude. It closed with a vigorous anathema against all heretics, joined in by all the Fathers present. Its business, however, was not only the doctrine but the discipline of the Church. Twelve of its Sessions were devoted to the former, but the tenor of their doctrinal decisions can be more conveniently studied as presented in the Profession of the Tridentine Faith, otherwise known as the Creed of Pius IV.

The doctrinal manifestos of Protestant communities necessitated a counter-statement.

The Council of Trent.



II. THE DOCTRINE OF THE ROMAN CHURCH

The Council of Trent left to the Pope, who reserved to himself the exclusive right to explain the decrees of the Council, the preparation of a brief summary which should serve as a binding formula for all dignitaries and teachers of the Church. The Creed accordingly issued under his authority consists of twelve articles, and is set forth in the form of an individual declaration. The first article contains the Nicene Creed; the substance of the others may be given as follows:—

The Creed of Pope Pius IV.

The subscriber to the Creed declares his adherence to the apostolic and ecclesiastical traditions and all other observances and constitutions of the Church, and his acceptance of the Scriptures as interpreted by the Church and the unanimous consent of the Fathers, of the seven sacraments, namely, baptism, confirmation, the eucharist, penance, extreme unction, holy orders, and matrimony, and the received and approved ceremonies used in the administration of these. He further accepts the definitions of the Council of Trent concerning original sin and justification, the mass as a true, proper and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead, and the doctrine of transubstantiation, according to which, under either kind alone (*i.e.* either in the bread or the wine), Christ is received, whole and entire, such communion being a true sacrament. He firmly believes in purgatory—that the souls therein are helped by the suffrages of the

Seven sacraments.

The mass a sacrifice.

Transubstantiation.

Purgatory.

Invocation of  
saints.

faithful, that the saints are to be honoured and invoked, and their relics to be held in veneration, seeing that they offer up prayers to God for men. The images also of Christ, of the Virgin and of the saints are to be had and retained, and duly honoured and venerated. The power of indulgences, it is affirmed, was left by Christ in the Church, and the use of them is most wholesome for Christian people. Then follows a promise of allegiance to the Roman Church and to the Pope, acceptance of the decisions of Councils, and a vow to preserve and propagate this faith to the end of life.

Indulgences.

The Roman  
Catechism.

The Roman Catechism, like the Profession or Creed of Pius IV., is based upon the Tridentine Decrees; it is more popular in form than the Decrees could be, and at the same time is more elaborate than the 'Creed.' It was prepared and issued by Pope Pius V. two years after the latter. It is a manual of theology intended for the guidance of the clergy, not to be put into the hands of the people. It is in four parts—based respectively on the Apostles' Creed, the doctrine of the sacraments, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer.<sup>1</sup>

The Immacu-  
late Concep-  
tion.

The last two Roman Symbols enumerated fall within the memory of living man. In 1854 Pope Pius IX. secured by correspondence—as we might say—rather than by the summoning of a Council, acceptance of his favourite dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, which he forthwith solemnly proclaimed in St. Peter's amid the shouts

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix E.

of the assembled multitude. It was to the effect 'that the most blessed Virgin Mary, in the first moment of her Conception' [*i.e.* the first moment that she was conceived], 'by a special grace and privilege of Almighty God, in virtue of the merits of Christ, was preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin.' This definition put the cope-stone upon Rome's system of doctrine, as the Infallibility decree of 1870 crowned her system of ecclesiastical organisation. Modern Romanism may be said to be identified with the worship of the Virgin Mary—and has put itself to its supreme test with the assertion of the Infallibility of the Pope.

Six years before the Vatican Council of 1870, Pius IX. issued an encyclical letter,<sup>1</sup> accompanied by what is known as the Syllabus [*Syllabus Errorum*], a The Syllabus. catalogue of some eighty errors of the age. It condemns not only atheism, materialism, and other forms of infidelity, rationalism, latitudinarianism, but also civil and religious liberty, and asserts the supreme control of the Church over public education, science and literature. 'Bible Societies'<sup>2</sup> are classed with socialistic and communistic associations. 'The Pope still holds that it is right to forbid and exclude all religions but his own, when he has the power to do so; . . . and he refuses to make any terms with modern civilisation.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The letter is known as the encyclical *Quanta cura* of 8th December 1864. In it the Pope condemns sixteen propositions touching on errors of the age.—J. M.

<sup>2</sup> Syllabus, § iv.

<sup>3</sup> Schaff, *History of the Creeds*, p. 133.

The Vatican  
Council.

Papal  
infallibility.

The Old  
Catholic  
Church.

The Vatican Council was opened on 8th December 1869, and its chief work was accomplished when on 18th July 1870 the Decree of Papal Infallibility was promulgated. A strong minority, conspicuous for learning and piety—including the famous Professor Döllinger—were opposed to the decree, and three years after the Council, many of these joined together in founding the Old Catholic Church. Many others, as was to be expected, gave in rather than secede.

Papal infalli-  
bility a natural  
corollary of  
the principle  
of the authority  
of the Church.

‘The Vatican Council,’ says an eminent historian,<sup>1</sup> and in his judgment we cannot but concur, ‘was the necessary consequence of the Council of Trent. Catholicism in the sixteenth century had opposed the Reformation in order to take its stand exclusively upon the principle of the authority of the Church, and this principle is the soul of modern Catholicism and necessarily demands its full completion and development. . . . An infallible Pope is the incarnation of the authority of the Church, present every moment, ready every moment effectually to oppose the individual and his doubts, the present age and its criticism. . . . The principle of authority can go no further.’<sup>2</sup> Once this extreme height has been attained, a retrograde movement must necessarily follow; and the force which will bring about this movement is just this undue extension of the principle of authority.<sup>3</sup> We have seen the waters of Ultramontaniam rise in the course of this [the

<sup>1</sup> Sohm, *Ch. History*, p. 235.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 239-40.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix G.

nineteenth] century . . . they are but of yesterday.  
. . . As they came, so will they go ; and one thing  
is certain—that they will be powerless against the  
Evangelical Church ; for our house is built on a  
Rock, even on Christ our Lord.'

## CHAPTER VIII

### CREEDS OR CONFESSIONS OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH

#### I. THE REFORMATION MOVEMENT

PROBABLY no movement since the introduction of Christianity itself has been fraught with such momentous and far-reaching consequences as the Reformation in the sixteenth century. It would be a fascinating theme, from which we turn reluctantly away, to trace the causes of that mighty convulsion in the political as well as the religious world, in literature as well as in theology. We should see how men were groaning under oppressions and waxing indignant against corruptions, how the Teutonic race was preparing to throw off its state of tutelage, how Christianity as represented by the Roman Church was gilded, as one has said, with the elegancies, and weakened by the heartlessness of Paganism, how all things were laid in train and only needed the spark to kindle the flame, and the man who could control the conflagration. We should see how, when these came, the modern world rose phoenix-like from the ashes of the ancient order, the days of tyranny were past, the lamp of knowledge was lighted,

and liberty and progress went henceforth hand in hand.

It would be a congenial task to depict the personal influences of that time, the guides of the new movement—Luther, the monk with the deep eyes, the honest heart, and virile mind, with the courage of conviction, and strong in his dependence on divine aid; Zwingli, the brave, honourable, clear-headed man, unresponsive perhaps on the emotional or mystical side of religion, but of marvellous breadth and liberality of view; Calvin, with his disciplined mind and penetrating intellect, refined and cultured, great alike in thought and action, with a moral and religious character which has been described as impressed with a certain majesty like a Hebrew prophet—his appropriate symbol a hand offering the sacrifice of a bleeding heart to God.

The leaders of the Reformation.

Upon these matters, however attractive, we cannot at present dwell, our task being to get a view, brief and inadequate though it must necessarily be, of the symbolical books of a period more fertile in such productions than any except the first age of the Church. We begin with a consideration of the first and greatest of those divergences which have been often the reproach of the Reformation movement, but which could scarcely fail to appear when the power which enforced an external uniformity was withdrawn, and the inward unity which results from the perfect vision of truth and goodness had not yet dawned upon men. From the beginning

Divergences of the Reformation movement.

men have differed in opinion, and from the beginning there have been those who have mistaken union for unity.

The distinction between the Lutheran and the Reformed Church.

At the Diet of Speier in 1526, authority had been given to the Imperial States to put in motion or not, as they judged expedient, the edicts which had been issued against Luther and his followers. At the later Diet of Speier in 1529, that authority was withdrawn and that famous Protest was lodged by the States favouring the Reformation, from which those States acquired the name of *Protestant*. Strictly speaking, the term is applicable only to the German or Lutheran Reformation. In this country we are accustomed to use it as if it included all the Christian Churches which resulted from the Reformation, but on the Continent the historical distinction among the opponents of the Roman Church as Lutheran or Protestant, on the one hand, and Reformed, on the other, is carefully observed. The Lutheran Church includes within its ecclesiastical sphere of influence the greater part of Germany, as well as Denmark, Sweden and Norway, while the Reformed Churches are found in Switzerland, France, Holland, some parts of Germany, the British Islands and Colonies, and in America. The distinction is partly national and racial, but is chiefly due to circumstances and origin, since there were parallel movements against Rome in Germany and in Switzerland, though it was the hand of Luther that struck the blow and virtually freed both the Lutherans and the Reformed. In most points of

(1) It is partly national and racial.



doctrine they agree, their only important difference being as to the Real Presence in the Lord's Supper which the Lutheran Church affirms.<sup>1</sup> One cannot but intensely regret the failure of a conference held in Marburg between Luther and Zwingli. When the Swiss Reformer, declaring that he saw in this difference no obstacle to fellowship, with tears in his eyes held out his hand to Luther, the latter, having written with a piece of chalk on the table between them the words 'This is my body,' refused to acknowledge any one who did not accept the words in the most absolute and literal sense. Had an understanding been arrived at, and common cause been made between the two sections of the Reformers, many a dark page of the subsequent history might never have come to be written. One cannot blame Luther for what was to him a matter of conscience, though one deplores the intellectual limitation which made it so.

(2) Doctrinal distinction—the Real Presence.

In accordance with the distinction just explained, we consider in the present chapter the Creeds or Confessions of the Lutheran Church.

<sup>1</sup> The Lutheran position is stated in the *Formula of Concord*, Art. vii., 1576: 'It is asked whether in the Holy Supper the true body and true blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are truly and substantially present, and are distributed with the bread and wine, and are taken with the mouth by all those who use this sacrament, be they worthy or unworthy, good or bad, believers or unbelievers, in such wise, nevertheless, as that believers derive consolation and life from the Supper of the Lord, but unbelievers take it unto condemnation. The Zwinglians deny this presence and dispensation of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, but we affirm the same' (Schaff, *Creeds*).—J. M.

## II. DOCTRINAL SYMBOLS OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Book of Concord containing nine documents.

The Book of Concord, as the collection of the Symbolical documents of the Lutheran Church is designated, was first published in 1580, and embraces, besides the three oecumenical Creeds, six distinctively Lutheran formularies. Of these by far the most important, and that which may be regarded as the chief Protestant Creed, is the Augsburg Confession. Next to it, among the Lutheran symbolical documents, come Luther's Larger and Smaller Catechisms; the Apology for the Augsburg Confession, which is useful as an authentic commentary upon that document; the Smalcald Articles, which state the case against Rome, and constitute the Protestant Declaration of Independence, but are of little more than historical interest; and the Formula of Concord, which, however, never attained general acceptance even within the circle of Lutheranism itself.

1. The Augsburg Confession of Melanchthon.

It was in 1530, the year following the Protest of Speier, that, in obedience to the command of the Emperor Charles v., the princes of the German States who adhered to Luther presented at the Diet of Augsburg a Confession of their faith which had been prepared by the pious and learned coadjutor of Luther, Philip Melanchthon. That we are already far away from the terse directness of the ancient creeds which have so far occupied our attention is clear from the fact that this Apology or Manifesto of the German Protestants took, it is said, two hours to read. A number of eminent

theologians on the Roman side were appointed to answer it, and in reply to their criticisms Melancthon wrote his 'Apology for the Augsburg Confession,' which, however, the Diet refused even to receive and consider.

The Augsburg Confession consists of two parts, the first setting forth in twenty-one articles the chief heads of the faith, and the second in seven articles dealing with the abuses which the Reformers had sought to correct. In calm and moderate language it states the large measure of agreement of the Reformers with their adversaries, especially in regard to the common acceptance of the Oecumenical Creeds; then the points where the Protestants find themselves compelled to differ from the Roman doctrine; and this is followed by a careful discrimination between the position maintained by them and that of other dissentients such as the Anabaptists, whose extreme opinions were held to have imperilled the whole movement. The abuses described in the second part refer to ceremonies and practices such as the communion in one kind, the celibacy of the clergy, and the sacrifice of the Mass.

It sets forth  
(1) the agree-  
ment between  
Roman  
Catholics and  
Reformers;  
(2) the points  
of difference.

The papal party, it is said, were surprised at the moderation of the Confession, and despaired of refuting it, if restricted to arguments drawn from Scripture only. It claims on its own behalf that it is nowhere at variance with the Scriptures, or with the Church catholic, or even with the Roman Church itself so far as the Church is known from written

It claims to be  
consistent with  
Scripture and  
the Roman  
canons.

records. It breathes a hope that the presentation of the statement contained in it may lead to liberty being granted to reform what has been found objectionable—since, it is urged, ‘not even the canons (that is, the rules of the Church as formulated by its Councils) are so severe as to demand the same rites everywhere, nor were the rites of all churches at any time the same.’

The Augsburg Confession, though thus occasional in its origin, was from its first appearance recognised as a clear and comprehensive statement of the Protestant position, and for the next ten years frequent editions were issued, not however of the original text only, but with various changes and improvements by the author, even at last with certain doctrinal modifications by which Melancthon desired to conciliate opponents and attain some measure of unity. However important and desirable these changes might be theologically, there was an obvious inconvenience in introducing them into a historical document. The original copies, both in Latin and German, have long since disappeared and their precise tenor is unknown.<sup>1</sup> Strict Lutherans disapproved especially of the later modifications and upheld the *Invariata* or first printed text of 1530 or 1531, as against the *Variata* or altered text of 1540. The controversy has at times run very high. According to Schaff, the earliest extant MS. texts are inaccurate and defective; the earliest printed editions are ‘full of errors

<sup>1</sup> See Schaff, *History of the Creeds*, pp. 237 f.

and omissions and were condemned by Melanchthon' himself, while Melanchthon's own first edition, issued in both Latin and German, in 1531, 'contained already verbal changes and improvements. At the same time, the altered edition of 1540, though not, strictly speaking, a symbolical book of binding authority anywhere, is yet far more than a private document, and represents an important element in the public history of the Lutheran Church in the sixteenth century, and the present theological convictions of a very large party in that Church.'

The 'Apology of the Augsburg Confession' was prepared, as already stated, by Melanchthon in reply to the 'Confutation' of that Confession by the Roman Catholic divines. It is seven times the size of the Confession itself, 'is written with solid learning, clearness and moderation, though not without errors in exegesis and patristic quotations. . . . It greatly strengthened the confidence of scholars in the cause of Protestantism.' Like the Confession, it underwent various modifications at the hands of its author.

2. Melanchthon's 'Apology of the Augsburg Confession.'

The Reformation, as a broad popular movement, founded upon definite intellectual convictions, depended for its success upon the wide diffusion of religious knowledge. All the forces and opportunities of the home, the school and the Church were pressed into the service. Many Catechisms were prepared as guides for such instruction by Melanchthon and others, but the best and most widely used was Luther's Smaller Catechism, which still imparts its

Efforts of the Reformers to spread Reformation principles.

3. Luther's  
Smaller  
Catechism.

special character to the training of the young in the Lutheran Church. It dates from 1529. As usually given it consists of six parts or chapters—(1) The Ten Commandments. (2) The Apostles' Creed. (3) The Lord's Prayer. (4) Baptism. (5) Confession. (6) The Sacrament of the Altar, or the Lord's Supper. The fifth part, of which the full title is, 'How the simpler folks should be taught to confess,' is omitted in some editions, and in some is added as Part VI., or as an appendix, though there is no doubt of its having been written by Luther. An enlarged form of the fifth part, sometimes given, including questions as to the Power of the Keys, is of uncertain authorship. Luther also added appendices of a devotional character containing helps to Morning and Evening Prayer, Grace before and after meat, and what he called the Home Table, or a selection of texts for 'divers holy orders and estates, which may serve to admonish them respectively of their offices and duties.' Early editions also included forms for Marriage and Baptism, but these are omitted from the Book of Concord. In his preface to the Catechism, Luther gave useful hints as to its use, which doubtless contributed to its popularity. To its success is attributed the rapid growth of catechetical literature in the Reformed Church also, and even in the Roman Catholic Church. This Smaller Catechism of the German Reformer is justly ranked as one of the three most notable Catechisms of the modern world, the other two being the Heidelberg Catechism and the Westminster Shorter Cate-

The three  
most notable  
modern  
Catechisms.

chism. Luther's Larger Catechism, as in the case of the Larger Catechism of the Westminster Divines, has been practically superseded by the more brief and popular manual. The Larger was prepared first, but the Smaller is not a mere abridgment of it, but has been truly described as its 'ripe flower and fruit.' The Larger is not in the form of Question and Answer, but of continuous exposition; it is therefore not a catechism in the modern sense of the word.

The Articles of Smalcald were prepared by Luther, to be submitted to a General Council which Pope Paul III. proposed to convene at Mantua in 1537. The Articles were approved by an assembly of Lutheran princes and theologians held in the town of Schmalkalden in Thuringia. The Council, however, which was intended to meet at Mantua, did not come together until 1545 in Trent, as we saw in the last chapter. The Smalcald Articles are in three parts. The first recites the doctrines of the ancient creeds which the Lutherans held in common with their opponents. The second argues against the mass, purgatory, the invocation of saints, monasticism and Popery, and puts in the forefront the cardinal principle of justification by faith. The third part deals with questions of sin, the law, repentance, the sacraments and other doctrines and ordinances. Melanchthon, at the request of those assembled at Smalcald, added an appendix on the Papal pretensions, condemning as 'false, impious, tyrannical and pernicious in the

4. Luther's  
Articles of  
Smalcald.

The case  
against Rome  
stated in an  
appendix by  
Melanchthon.

Hope of reformation from within abandoned.

extreme' the assertion of the Pope's primacy and universal ecclesiastical jurisdiction, his claim to regulate civil affairs, and the necessity of accepting these doctrines at the risk of being excluded from eternal salvation. The significance of the whole document lies in the evidence it affords that the Lutherans no longer hoped to reform the Church from within, but were prepared to separate themselves from it, and maintain an attitude of antagonism to it, so long as it remained unreformed.

5. The Formula of Concord.

Its object, to end internal controversy.

The Formula of Concord, as its name implies, is an irenical document, designed to bring doctrinal unity and peace to the Lutheran Church after thirty years of controversy. For the Reformers were far from agreeing on all points among themselves, and having left a Church which claimed to be infallible, it was difficult for them to divest themselves of a hope to found one which should be more entitled to put forward the same claim. It was long before they could be brought to see that as they had differed from Rome, so they would probably with equal conscientiousness differ from each other. Hence the intensity and bitterness of their disputes.

Toleration of differences was at first unfamiliar and difficult.

Into the details of these controversies it is neither necessary nor possible to enter at present. No less than nine subjects of disputation have been enumerated, and in several of them the learned and gentle Melanchthon was concerned. He was at all times less inclined to extreme views; he was always more anxious for peace, and more willing for compromise, than Luther and many others of those



who laboured in the cause of the Reformation. The unfortunate result of the strife was that not only was the cause weakened by these internal divisions, but its representatives were thereby exposed to the ridicule and reproach of their opponents and became the despair of their friends. It seemed as if the whole movement was to end in utter confusion and failure. After several attempts to find a way out of the threatened destruction, the 'Formula of Concord,' still in use, was completed by six learned divines who met in 1577 in the Cloister of Bergen, near Magdeburg, by order of the Elector of Saxony. It was published with the other documents making up the Book of Concord in 1580. Its Latin text received its final form in 1584. It consists of two parts, the Epitome, and the 'Solid Repetition and Declaration,' as it is termed. The latter is an expansion, explanation, and defence of the former. Each is divided into twelve articles, those of the one corresponding to those of the other. 'They begin with the anthropological doctrines of original sin and freedom of the will; next pass on to the soteriological questions concerning justification, good works, the law and the gospel, and the use of the law to believers . . . then to the Eucharist and the Person of Christ; and end with foreknowledge and election.'<sup>1</sup> The chief articles are those on the Lord's Supper and the Person of Christ, where we find the most peculiar features of Lutheran doctrine: The three most peculiar tenets of Lutheranism.

<sup>1</sup> Schaff, *History of the Creeds*, p. 312.

substantiation; (b) the communication of the properties of the divine nature of Christ to His human nature; and (c), as a consequence of this and as a basis for consubstantiation, the ubiquity or omnipresence of the body of Christ. In an introduction prefixed to each series of articles the authority of the canonical Scriptures as the supreme rule of faith and doctrine is strongly stated.

The Formula of Concord is the most disputed of the symbolical documents of Lutheranism. It could scarcely be expected that, after controversy so long and so violent, all parties would agree in any formula. The value attached to it has usually varied according to the prevalence or otherwise of a somewhat high and dry orthodoxy in the Lutheran Church. It stood at its highest at the close of the seventeenth century. It has been described as, next to the Augsburg Confession, 'the most important theological standard of the Lutheran Church,' but as differing from it in being the *sectarian* symbol of Lutheranism while the Augsburg Confession is its *catholic* symbol. It is 'the fullest embodiment of genuine Lutheran orthodoxy, as distinct from other denominations. It is for the Lutheran system what the Decrees of Trent are for the Roman Catholic, or the Canons of Dort for the Calvinistic. It marks also the definite point of separation between the Lutheran and the Reformed Churches.

Before leaving this last of the Lutheran Confessional documents, a word should be said as to what have been termed the peculiar tenets of

Among  
Lutheran  
symbols, the  
Formula ranks  
next to the  
Augsburg  
Confession.

Distinctive  
tenets of  
Lutheranism.

Lutheranism, one of which was for the first time fully developed in the Formula of Concord. The Roman Catholic doctrine of the Lord's Supper is transubstantiation, that, after consecration, the bread and wine cease to be bread and wine except in appearance, their substance being changed into that of the body and blood of our Lord. The Lutheran view, known as consubstantiation, so far modifies this by admitting that the bread and wine still remain bread and wine, but declaring that when, after consecration, the communicant partakes of them, there is introduced 'in, with and under' these outward elements the actual body and blood of Christ. But how, it might be asked, can that body which ascended to heaven be present thus in the sacrifice upon the altar? The reply is given by a peculiar theory of Christ's Person. In Him, it is said, the divine and human natures were so united, that the properties of each are communicated to the other [*communicatio idiomatum*]; at least—for the teaching stops short of one of its apparent consequences—the properties of the divine nature are communicated to the human nature. If, then, God is *everywhere* present, Christ is so also; and therefore also the body of Christ, which may thenceforth be upon the altar as well as in heaven. Consubstantiation, the *communicatio idiomatum*, and the ubiquity of Christ's body thus depend upon one another. It is only fair to say that the ubiquity doctrine was as energetically repudiated by Roman Catholicism as by all other forms of Protestantism.

(1) Consubstantiation.

(2) *Communicatio idiomatum*

(3) Ubiquity of Christ's body.

As in the case of the ancient Church, so in the Lutheran Church the Symbols which became established and received general acknowledgment were by no means all that were actually produced. Of the later Symbols, the proportion superseded was of course far smaller than in the ancient Church. There were few men and circles capable of composing and securing attention to such elaborate documents as the times demanded. Upon these occasional or abortive compositions it is not necessary to dwell, though some of them are not without interest. It is only needful for our purpose to pass under review the books in which the genius of the respective Churches has most characteristically expressed itself. Much more important than such forgotten formulas are the works of Luther himself, and the *Loci Communes*, the great theological work of Melanchthon. These, though not in any sense Creeds, enjoy a deserved reputation and authority.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE REFORMED CHURCHES

#### I. CLASSIFICATION OF THEIR CONFESSIONS

TURNING now to the other branch of the great Reformation movement, that which gave rise to what are known as the Reformed Churches, we find ourselves in the presence of a Creed development more extensive and more prolonged than that of Lutheranism. The difference is so far accounted for by variety of nationality, by less anxiety about breaking with the past, and by the political as well as religious upheavals to which the territories where the Reformed Churches predominated were subject. But it is noteworthy that, though produced under very different circumstances, the Reformed Confessions have a similarity among themselves and conform to type not less than the Lutheran. Though independent of one another and always separately organised, the Reformed Churches kept up a constant intercourse among themselves, and were always ready to learn from one another, and to render mutual assistance. Even a difference in the form of ecclesiastical organisation, such as that between Episcopacy and Presbyterianism, was not allowed to interfere with Church fellowship—at any rate for a time.

A general similarity owing to constant intercourse.

'Reformed'  
Confessions  
are—

(1) Pre-  
Calvinian.

(2) Calvinian.

(3) Post-  
Calvinian.

The Reformed Confessions number upwards of thirty and may be arranged chronologically—Calvin's influence and activity being taken as the point of departure. Thus we have those of the pre-Calvinian period, including the Tetrapolitan, the First Confession of Basel, the First Helvetic, the Zurich Confession, and the Anglican Articles. Next come those framed under Calvin's influence, namely, the *Consensus Tigurinus*, the *Consensus* of Geneva, the French, Belgic, Scottish, and Hungarian Confessions, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Second Helvetic Confession. Finally we have the post-Calvinian, such as the Brandenburg Confessions, the Canons of Dort, the Westminster Confession, and the Formula *Consensus Helvetici*. Or they may be arranged according to their place of origin, their nationality, which gives us the Swiss family, the German, French, Belgic, and Dutch; also the British. The Bohemian, Polish, and Hungarian Confessions are of minor consequence, and many of the others were purely local in origin and influence. Some fell into disuse on the appearance of more suitable expositions of doctrine and belief.

'None of them,' says an eminent authority, ' . . . has the same commanding position as the Augsburg Confession in the Lutheran Church. Those which have been most widely accepted and are still most in use are the Heidelberg or Palatine Catechism, the Thirty-nine Articles, and the Westminster Confession. The Second Helvetic (Swiss) Confession and the Canons of Dort are equal to them

'Reformed'  
symbols still in  
use and widely  
accepted are—  
(1) The Heidel-  
berg Cate-  
chism;  
(2) the Thirty-  
nine Articles;  
(3) the West-  
minster Con-  
fession.

in authority and theological importance, but less adapted for popular use. All the rest have now little more than historical significance.' We proceed to notice the chief of these, including the Gallican [or French] and Belgic Confessions, as Symbols having national authority. We reserve the British Creeds for subsequent chapters.

## II. SOME OF THE CONTINENTAL 'REFORMED' SYMBOLICAL DOCUMENTS

The First Helvetic Confession, sometimes called the Second of Basel, is chiefly noteworthy as being the first Reformed Confession having national recognition. Its doctrine of the sacraments is moderately Zwinglian. An interesting point in connection with it is that two at least of the eminent men who were at its formation wished to 'add a caution against the binding authority of this or any other confession that might interfere with the supreme authority of the Word of God and with Christian liberty.' The addition was not accepted by the Commission who drew it up, although it represented the really Protestant position in regard to all such formularies; but the time had scarcely come for openly and frankly acknowledging this.

The Second Helvetic Confession, which appeared thirty years later, is a much more important document and is reckoned among the typical Reformed Symbols. It is the work of Henry Bullinger, the disciple and successor of Zwingli, and a man of great

(1) The First  
Helvetic Con-  
fession, A. D.  
1536.

(2) The Second  
Helvetic Con-  
fession, A. D.  
1566.

learning and piety. He composed it for his own use, 'as an abiding testimony of the faith in which he had lived and in which he wished to die.' But events led to its publication and ultimate adoption as the Swiss national Confession. Even beyond Switzerland and the Palatinate it was sanctioned, or at least approved, so that it became the most widely diffused and authoritative of all the Continental Reformed Symbols with the exception of the Heidelberg Catechism. It was based upon the First Helvetic Confession, in which Bullinger also had a share, but contains many improvements, besides being much more comprehensive. It has been described as 'Scriptural and catholic, wise and judicious, full and elaborate, yet simple and clear, uncompromising towards the errors of Rome, and moderate in its dissent from the Lutheran dogmas.' It is, of course, more of the nature of a theological treatise than of a popular Creed. The Heidelberg Catechism, which has been more than once referred to, fulfils the latter purpose among the Churches of the Continent, as the Westminster Shorter Catechism does amongst English-speaking Presbyterians.

Most widely diffused of all the Continental Reformed Symbols—the Heidelberg Catechism excepted.

Its character.

(3) The Heidelberg Catechism—the popular Creed of Continental 'Reformed' Churches.

Its history.

The Palatinate, of which Heidelberg was the capital, occupied a peculiar position in Reformation times. It was a German Province, but attached itself to the Reformed type of theology rather than to the Lutheran. Melanchthon himself had aided in furthering the Reformation within it, and 'impressed upon it the character of a moderate Luther-



anism friendly to Calvinism.' But when Heidelberg had become a battle-ground of all the phases of current theology, Frederick III., the Elector, one of the finest characters among the princes of his time, entrusted two young theologians of the University, Ursinus and Olevianus [Bär and Olewig], with the preparation of a catechism which should 'secure harmony of teaching and lay a solid foundation for the religious instruction of the rising generation.' The peculiar gifts of the writers selected, 'the didactic clearness and precision of the one, and the pathetic warmth and unction of the other, were blended in beautiful harmony' and produced a joint work which is far superior to the separate productions of either. It was published early in 1563, was translated into all the European and many Asiatic languages, and has been more widely circulated than perhaps any other book except the Bible, the *Imitation of Christ*, and the *Pilgrim's Progress*. 'It follows the order of the Epistle to the Romans, and is divided into three parts.' After two introductory questions, 'the first part treats of the sin and misery of man; the second, of the redemption by Christ; the third, of the thankfulness of the redeemed, or the Christian life.' The second part includes an exposition of the Apostles' Creed and the doctrine of the sacraments; the third, an exposition of the Decalogue and of the Lord's Prayer.

The first question of the Heidelberg Catechism has been universally admired, no less indeed than

The first question is characteristic—full of religious feeling.

the first question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, but the difference of starting-point of these celebrated documents is itself significant and instructive. The first question of the Heidelberg Catechism is, 'What is thy only comfort in life and in death?' and the answer is, 'That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and redeemed me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that, without the will of my Father in heaven, not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must work together for my salvation. Wherefore by His Holy Spirit He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing and ready henceforth to live unto Him.'

Chief defect of the Heidelberg Catechism—its length.

This answer illustrates, however, what has been noted as the chief defect of the Catechism, that in length and elaboration it is somewhat beyond the capacity and memory of children. But it must be recognised that it sets forth the Calvinistic system with remarkable moderation, softening its more angular and repellent features. For the Heidelberg Catechism was throughout constructed under Calvin's influence, though the Second Helvetic Confession which succeeded it three years later has been classed as the last and best of the Zwinglian family of Creeds. It is interesting to note that the Heidelberg Catechism was repeatedly printed by public authority in Scotland, even after

Long in use in Scotland.

the appearance of the Westminster Standards, though it was ultimately superseded by the Shorter Catechism.

The Reformation in France maintained only a The Gallican Confession. struggling existence until it was organised under the auspices of Calvin. The first national Synod of the Reformed Church of France was held in 1559, when a draft Confession prepared by Calvin was submitted and in an enlarged form adopted. It was revised and ratified at the Seventh National Synod held at La Rochelle in 1571, from which circumstance it is sometimes called the Confession of Rochelle, the more common name being the Gallican Confession. It is Calvinistic both in contents and form, beginning with the doctrine of God, and going on through the doctrines of man, of salvation, and of the Church and sacraments, to the relation of the civil and ecclesiastical powers.

The history of the Reformed religion in the The Belgic Confession. Netherlands is one of romantic heroism. Its martyrs are said to have exceeded in number those of any other Protestant Church during the sixteenth century, and perhaps those of the whole primitive Church under the Roman Empire. The Belgic Confession was prepared in 1561 by Guido de Brès and two other theologians. De Brès afterwards sealed his faith with his blood. It was adopted by several Synods, from that of Antwerp in 1566 to that of Dort in 1619. By the latter the text was rescued from changes which had been introduced in the Arminian interest. It contains

thirty-seven articles and follows in general the order of the Gallican Confession. It is accounted as, next to the Westminster Confession, the best statement of the Calvinistic system of doctrine.

### III. THE CANONS OF THE SYNOD OF DORT

#### I. *The Arminian Controversy*

The Arminian controversy, which came to a head at the Synod of Dort in 1619, represents the most serious division which has arisen within the Reformed Church. The point at issue is one of those with regard to which a definite conclusion can never be reached, though men cannot but think and inquire about it, and are always tending to one or other of two extremes. The arguments in such cases turn upon the practical consequences, or the religious implications of the doctrine in dispute, in addition, of course, to the bearing of Scripture upon it. Very often these practical consequences are not apparent to the first who may propound or defend the view, but only manifest themselves in the course of time. Each side generally represents a truth which the other is apt to overlook.

The two stand-  
points—Divine  
Sovereignty  
and Human  
Responsibility.

The contest in the present case was as to ‘the relation of the divine sovereignty and human responsibility.’ It has been compared to the struggle between strict Lutheran orthodoxy and the milder views of Melanchthon in the previous generation. And ‘in both Churches,’ it has been remarked, ‘the spirit of the conquered party rose again from

time to time within the ranks of orthodoxy to exert its moderating and liberalising influence or to open new issues in the progressive march of theological science.'

Arminianism takes its name from its founder James Arminius [Jacob van Hermanns], a minister at Amsterdam, and afterwards professor at Leyden, who however died before the controversy had proceeded very far. His mantle was assumed by Simon Episcopius, his successor at Leyden, and among the adherents of the party was Grotius, eminent alike as jurist and as theologian.

The Arminians drew up a statement of their views under the name of a Remonstrance, which was signed by forty-six ministers and laid before the representatives of Holland and West Friesland in 1610. From this document the party were known as Remonstrants. The controversy continuing unabated, the States-General summoned a National Synod which met at Dordrecht, or Dort, in November 1618 and went on till May 1619. 'It consisted of eighty-four members and eighteen secular commissioners. . . . Foreign Reformed Churches were invited to send at least three or four divines each, with right to vote.'<sup>1</sup> The Synod was so constituted, however, that the result was a foregone conclusion. The Arminians were not summoned to deliberate but to be condemned and sentenced. Two hundred Arminian clergymen were deposed. But though the Canons of Dort were

History of the controversy.

Arminians or Remonstrants.

A National Synod summoned.

Victory of Calvinism over Arminianism.

<sup>1</sup> Schaff, *History of the Creeds*, p. 512.

received with respect in other Reformed Churches, that of France was the only one in which they were formally adopted. A parallel has been drawn between them and the Lutheran Formula of Concord. 'Both,' it is said, 'consolidated orthodoxy at the expense of freedom, sanctioned a narrow confessionalism, and widened the breach between the two branches of the Reformation.'<sup>1</sup> The Lutherans indeed suspected, though without just grounds, that the condemnation of the Remonstrants was aimed at themselves. Arminianism is still represented in Holland as a sect, though its numbers are small. It was one of those more or less negative tendencies which are seldom associated with constructive power. But, through the writings of its great scholars, it has exerted a powerful influence—nowhere more than in the religious thought of England, in Anglican and Wesleyan theology—and has served a useful purpose in modifying the rigours of Calvinism, and keeping alive the human interest in a great question. It is probably because it is so largely absorbed into other systems and Churches that it languishes somewhat when left to sustain by itself the burden of a Church organisation.

How  
Arminianism  
has affected  
religious  
thought in  
England.

## 2. *The Theological Questions at Issue*

Five points of  
Calvinism  
denied by the  
Arminians.

The celebrated five points of Calvinism which the Arminians attacked and the Canons of Dort affirmed are briefly as follows:—

I. That the decrees of God affecting the salvation

<sup>1</sup> Schaff, *History of the Creeds*, p. 513.

or condemnation of men are explicable only by reference to His good pleasure, and have no other reason that we can fathom—to which the Arminians replied that they must be conditioned by foreknowledge and made dependent on the faith or unbelief of men as foreseen by God.

1. God's 'decrees' = His 'good pleasure.'

2. That the salvation of a certain portion only of mankind was contemplated by God, the rest being left to their condemnation for the glory of His righteousness. The Arminians held that the atonement was intended to be universal, though the grace of God may be resisted and only those who accept it are actually saved (a position in which all moderate Calvinists are really at one with them).

2. Only some are elect.

3. That not only the intention of God in salvation, but the death of Christ itself was partial, applying only to the elect. The answer to this position is really included in that directed against the second difficulty. In its place the Arminians made a positive statement which is somewhat of a concession to their opponents, as to the impossibility of any man attaining saving faith unless he is regenerated and renewed by God in Christ through the Holy Spirit.

3. Christ's atonement only for the elect.

4. The grace wrought by the Holy Spirit in the elect is *irresistible*, so that salvation is independent of their own will, while it is withheld from others, the outward call addressed to them becoming thus little more than a form. The Arminians, on the other hand, contended that while grace is needful for the spiritual life, it may be resisted and forfeited.

4. The grace of the Holy Spirit irresistible.

5. Grace once received cannot be lost.

5. That those who have received this irresistible grace can never absolutely lose it again, but are kept by it until the end. That grace cannot be lost, the Remonstrance holds to be incapable of proof from Scripture, and its adherents contended that believers might finally and irretrievably fall from grace, and denied that any one could have any assurance of salvation.

Counter-statements of the Canons of Dort.

The Canons of Dort reaffirm the Calvinistic positions, but with such explanations as remove much of the unpleasant impression made by the doctrines when too baldly and unconditionally stated. Their tenor is in general to repudiate the decree of reprobation, while magnifying the goodness of God shown in salvation. God does not prevent any from believing and being saved, but He does secure that some should believe and be saved. The fault of the lost is in themselves, but the saved have no merit and may not glory in themselves, but only in the Lord. The strongest part of the Calvinistic answer is in regard to the last of the Synod's points—Perseverance. The Arminian in denying the possibility of assurance takes away one of the greatest spiritual blessings and comforts which man can have, and all reason for rejoicing in the Lord. The object of assurance is not indeed to awaken pride and lead to a false security, but that 'the consideration of this benefit should serve as an incentive to the serious and constant practice of gratitude and good works, as appears from the testimonies of Scripture and the

1. Reprobation by God's decree is denied.

2. To have the 'assurance of perseverance to the end' is a great comfort, not a false security.



examples of the saints.' It is the judgment of Mr. Froude, no biassed witness, that 'if Arminianism most commends itself to our feelings, Calvinism is nearer to the facts, however harsh and forbidding these facts may seem.'<sup>1</sup> And he goes on to ask 'how it came to pass that if Calvinism is indeed the hard and unreasonable creed which modern enlightenment declares it to be, it has possessed such singular attractions in past times for some of the greatest men that ever lived'—for William the Silent, and Luther (for on these points Luther was at one with Calvin), for Knox and Andrew Melville, and the Regent Moray, for Coligny, Cromwell, Milton and Bunyan. Grapes do not grow on bramble bushes. He finds that 'in the better sort of men there are two elementary convictions; that there is over all things an unsleeping, inflexible, all-ordering, just power, and that this power governs the world by laws which can be seen in their effects, and on the obedience to which, and on nothing else, human welfare depends.' It is to this power the good man looks in his contest with his lower self, with the evil around him; and in alliance with it, in the faithful service of it, with total forgetfulness of self, there is victory.

'Arminianism commends itself to our feelings; Calvinism is nearer the facts.'

'Two elementary convictions'—  
(1) 'An all-ordering just power.'  
(2) 'On obedience' to Him 'human welfare depends.'

Is it then, it may well be asked, to encourage spiritual pride to remember the words of our Lord, 'No man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand'? Nay, rather, 'If God be for us, who can be against us?'

<sup>1</sup> *Short Studies*, vol. ii. p. 6.

## CHAPTER X

### BRITISH CREEDS

THE British Creeds of what may be called the first order which are still in use are (1) the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, and (2) the Westminster Confession of Faith, which, with the relative Larger and Shorter Catechisms, forms the doctrinal standard of most of the Presbyterian Churches. One or other of these is still in force over a great part of these islands. The Thirty-nine Articles had several predecessors, the documents being generally known by the number of articles they respectively contained; there were also two attempts to supplement them in the direction of a more definite Calvinism, namely, the Lambeth Articles and the Irish Articles. Similarly in Scotland the Westminster Standards took the place of two native products, the Scottish Confession of 1560, and the National Covenant of 1581, which is frequently called the Second Scottish Confession. These will fall to be noticed, but we must pass over the tenets of the numerous evangelical denominations which exist in our midst, each as a rule having a doctrinal declaration of its own.

Confessional  
statements.

## I. THE EARLIER ANGLICAN ARTICLES

To understand the history of the Thirty-nine Articles we must recall for a moment the very peculiar course which the Reformation in England followed. Henry VIII., for reasons of his own, broke with the Pope, but it was the Papacy, not Popery, which he really repudiated. He desired that belief and worship should in all respects remain as they had been, only with himself instead of the Roman Pontiff as Supreme Head of the Church. Personally he detested the doctrines of the Reformation, and, by a book against Luther, had earned from Pope Leo X. the title of *Defender of the Faith*, the claim to which on the part of the British kings as Henry's successors still stands upon the face of every British coin. It was not Cranmer's religion so much as his pliability which commended him to his king. Cranmer's own theological opinions were only gradually formed, first under Lutheran and afterwards under Calvinistic influences. But the new views were meantime spreading among the people, and at the great Universities in particular were eagerly studied. So when Edward VI. came to the throne, and Cranmer's influence was predominant, the Reformation became a reality, a religious power in the land, and no longer a mere defiance of the Papacy or an excuse for plundering monasteries and churches. One thing only it wanted to secure its place in the very heart of English life, and that was the fires of persecution, which were

Henry VIII.  
broke with the  
Pope, not with  
Popery.

How the new  
order became  
rooted.

supplied in abundance in the brief reign of Mary. Those whom persecution dispersed over the Continent returned with a faith instructed as well as deepened. The stronger faith, the recollection of the horrors which had been endured, the feeling which connected the horrors with a dread of a foreign yoke, were the factors, along with religious fanaticism, that made a restoration of the old order practically impossible. With Elizabeth, Protestantism, using the word in its most general sense, became supreme; although to her it was mainly a matter of policy, her only concern being to secure uniformity, at least of worship, within the Reformed Church. But the policy was a patriotic one, and served her and England well.

The *via media*  
of the Church  
of England.

The outward framework of the Church of England remained practically untouched. The Reformation doctrines permeated the old institution but were never driven to overthrow and reconstruct it. Indeed, as little as possible was changed. The Government of the Church remained as before, with the monarch as Governor—so Elizabeth preferred to call herself rather than Head, which had been the title assumed by her father.<sup>1</sup> The ritual was modified only in so far as was necessary to

<sup>1</sup> The Act of Supremacy, 1534, declared that the King's majesty 'justly and rightfully is and ought to be Supreme Head of the Church of England and to enjoy all the honours, dignities, pre-eminencies, jurisdictions, privileges, authorities, immunities, profits and commodities, to the said dignity of Supreme Head of the Church belonging and appertaining.' The oath imposed by the Act of Supremacy, 1559, acknowledged the queen to be the 'Supreme Governor of the Realm as well in all spiritual or ecclesiastical things as temporal.'—J. M.

make it not irreconcilable with the doctrines expressed in the formularies. The Anglican Reformation being thus as much ecclesiastical and political as religious, its result was a compromise between various tendencies; it was comprehensive rather than uniform, aiming at practical utility rather than theoretical consistency. Its theology has been said to be 'as much embodied in the episcopal polity and the liturgical worship as in the doctrinal standards. The Book of Common Prayer is catholic, though purged of superstitious elements; the Articles of religion are evangelical and moderately Calvinistic. . . . The English Church leaves room for catholic and evangelical, mediaeval and modern ideas, without an attempt to harmonise them, but her parties are one-sided, and differ as widely as separate denominations, though subject to the same bishop and worshipping at the same altar. She is composite and eclectic in her character, like the English language; she has more outward uniformity than inward unity; she is fixed in her organic structure, but elastic in doctrinal opinion, and has successively allowed opposite schools of theology to grow up which equally claim to be loyal to her genius and institutions.'<sup>1</sup>

The Ten Articles of Henry VIII., devised, it is said, by the king himself, at any rate issued by royal authority in 1536, are the first independent attempt to deal with doctrine after the rupture with Rome. Like the play of *Hamlet* without the

The Ten  
Articles of  
Henry VIII.

<sup>1</sup> Schaff, *History of the Creeds*, p. 599.

Roman  
doctrines in the  
Ten Articles.

part of Hamlet, they are Papal without the Pope. They mark the separation as purely external so far as it had gone, to whatever it might afterwards lead. Baptismal regeneration, transubstantiation, the invocation of saints, the doctrine of purgatory and prayers for the dead—all are there. A year later, an attempt was made by a committee of prelates, under the influence of Cranmer and Ridley, to move in the Protestant direction by the issue of the so-called 'Bishop's Book,' or the 'Institution of a Christian man,' but a few years later it was remodelled by Gardiner and his Romish associates, and re-issued as the 'King's Book.' Henry himself, however, had already opened up communications, although from political motives, with certain divines of the Lutheran communion, several of whom visited England; and between 1535 and 1538 an agreement consisting of Thirteen Articles was drawn up, based upon the Augsburg Confession, some passages of the latter being actually embodied in them. They never became operative, but are noteworthy as marking a stage in the development of the later formularies. The dalliance with Lutheranism was followed by a violent reaction. The Statute of the Six Articles, issued in 1539, reaffirmed transubstantiation, communion in one kind, clerical celibacy, the obligation of vows of chastity or widowhood, the necessity of private masses and of auricular confession. Severe penalties were attached to the violation of these requirements.

The Six Articles, though not always put into

practical operation, remained legally in force until the death of Henry. With the accession of Edward VI. began a reformation, first of worship, as embodied in the First and Second Prayer Books of Edward VI., and then of doctrine. The Forty-two Articles, prepared chiefly by Cranmer, were published in 1553. By this time Cranmer was less in sympathy with Lutheran doctrine and had drawn closer to that of the Reformed Churches, especially in regard to the Sacraments. In other respects, however, the Forty-two Articles leant upon the Thirteen Articles of 1538, as these in turn had leant upon the Augsburg Confession. They were issued in May 1553, and Edward VI. died in July of the same year. The history of the Articles remains accordingly in abeyance until after the accession of Elizabeth in 1558. The wavering Cranmer, firm at last, had now died the martyr's death. His work was taken up by the new Archbishop, Parker, who in 1559 set forth Eleven Articles as a provisional test of orthodoxy. These were based upon the Forty-two of Edward VI.'s reign, but avoided controverted topics.

Reformation of  
Edward VI.  
The Forty-two  
Articles.

Parker's  
Eleven  
Articles.

## II. THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES

The final settlement was arrived at when, in 1563, the now familiar Thirty-nine Articles were passed by both Houses of Convocation. In this revision seven of Cranmer's Forty-two Articles were omitted, and four new ones added, while various modifications were introduced into most of those remaining.

Seven of the  
Forty-two  
Articles  
omitted.

It is interesting to note the subjects of those thus omitted and added. They afford a key to the controversies of the time, and show us how such formularies reflect the urgency of current disputations, and relax their stringency when the necessity is past. The Articles omitted had almost all been directed against the extreme fanatics whose tenets had threatened to compromise and undermine Protestant freedom. Even immoral consequences had often been associated with the teaching of such fanatics. Thus the tenth Article repudiated an opinion which made God the author of sin. The nineteenth Article condemned those who, 'claiming preternatural illumination, regarded themselves as superior to the moral law and circulated opinions respecting it which were most evidently repugnant to Scripture.'<sup>1</sup> Again, of the omitted Articles from the thirty-ninth to the forty-second dealing with the Last Things, one declared that the resurrection of the dead will be extended to the body, and has thus *not* been realised already in the quickening of the pious soul—as some, notwithstanding St. Paul, contended that it had been.<sup>2</sup> Another affirmed that the spirit does not perish with the body. A third condemned Millenarianism as unscriptural, but also no doubt because many made such views a pretext for licentiousness both moral and political.<sup>3</sup> The fourth declared that the belief in the eventual restoration of all men was a

<sup>1</sup> Hardwick, *History of the Articles*, 1881, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129.



dangerous and destructive error.<sup>1</sup> Besides these, the sixteenth Article on Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost was ‘abandoned, it may be from a reluctance to define the nature of the irremissible sin, or, as in other cases, from the partial disappearance of the sect at which it had been levelled.’ The four Articles *added* in 1563 are one on the Holy Ghost; one on good works; one denying that the wicked, and such as be void of a living faith, do in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper become partakers of Christ, but rather to their condemnation do eat and drink the sign or sacrament of so great a thing; while the succeeding Article, also an addition, enjoins communion in both kinds—*i.e.* that the cup is not to be denied to the laity. The former of these two articles on the Eucharist is found in Archbishop Parker’s MS., and appears in the English Articles as settled in 1571, but is omitted in the Latin Articles of 1563, it is said, through the personal influence of Queen Elizabeth. The Latin and English versions, which differ in certain minor points, are regarded in the Anglican Church as equally authoritative, and serve to explain each other in places when either may be ambiguous or obscure.

Four Articles  
added.

The theological tendencies represented in the Thirty-nine Articles have been conveniently summarised as follows :—<sup>2</sup>

The theology  
of the Thirty-  
nine Articles.

1. ‘They are *catholic* in the oecumenical doctrines of the trinity and incarnation, like all the Protes-

<sup>1</sup> Hardwick, *History of the Articles*, 1881, pp. 100, 129.

<sup>2</sup> Schaff, *History of the Creeds*, pp. 622-3.

tant Confessions of the Reformation period ; and they state these doctrines partly in the very words of two *Lutheran* documents, viz. the Augsburg Confession and the Württemberg Confession.

2. 'They are *Augustinian* in regard to the doctrines of free-will, sin and grace ; herein likewise agreeing with the Continental Reformers, especially the Lutheran.

3. 'They are *Protestant* and *evangelical* in rejecting the peculiar errors and abuses of Rome, and in teaching those doctrines of Scripture and tradition—justification by faith, faith and good works, the Church and the number of the sacraments—which Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin held in common.

4. 'They are *Reformed* or *moderately Calvinistic* in the two doctrines of predestination and the Lord's Supper, in which the Lutheran and Reformed Churches differed ; although the chief Reformed Confessions were framed not before but after the Articles.

5. 'They are *Erastian* in the political sections, teaching the closest union of Church and State, and the royal supremacy in matters ecclesiastical as well as civil.

6. 'Article Thirty-five, referring to the Prayer Book and the consecration of archbishops, bishops, priests and deacons, is purely *Anglican* and *Episcopalian*, and excited the opposition of the Puritans.'

Two attempts were made at a subsequent period to supplement the Thirty-nine Articles by others more pronouncedly Calvinistic. Calvin's influence

was predominant in England in the end of the sixteenth century; and the occasion of the Lambeth Articles, as they are called, was a violent controversy which arose in the University of Cambridge. They were framed by representatives of the University and Archbishop Whitgift, and were nine in number, all dealing with questions of election and saving grace. They were adopted at Lambeth in November 1595. They did not, however, receive the royal sanction and have never enjoyed full symbolical authority.

The Lambeth Articles—a Calvinist supplement of the Thirty-nine.

The other formulary referred to is that containing the Irish Articles of 1615. The Prayer Book was adopted in Ireland in 1560, but it is uncertain whether the Articles were also adopted. The probability is that they were not, as the first convocation of the Irish Protestant Clergy held in 1615 agreed upon a series which had been prepared by the famous James Ussher, then Vice-Chancellor of Trinity College, Dublin, and afterwards Archbishop of Armagh. They are one hundred and four in number, arranged under nineteen heads. They 'incorporate the substance of the Thirty-nine Articles and the Lambeth Articles, but are more systematic and complete.' They are especially interesting to Presbyterians as having been the chief basis of the Westminster Confession, which has many points of resemblance to them.

The Irish Articles also more Calvinist than the Thirty-nine.

The Westminster Confession based on the Irish Articles.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE SCOTTISH CONFESSIONS—THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION

Reformation  
in England  
and Scotland  
contrasted.

‘WHILE in England,’ it has been said, ‘politics controlled religion, in Scotland religion controlled politics.’ The Reformation certainly took an entirely different course in the two countries. In England it began with the royal defiance of the Pope, in Scotland with the diffusion among the people of the doctrines of the Reformers. In England the ancient order was left as far as possible unchanged; in Scotland it was altered root and branch. In worship and government the Church of England remained to outward appearance very much what it had been, while that of Scotland was modelled upon Geneva and the ideals of the English Puritans. Though the first impulse of Reformation in Scotland came from Lutheran writings, it was Calvinism that presided over its development; for the genius who impressed his personality upon it was John Knox, at once the Luther and the Calvin of Scotland, who refused an English bishopric on account of the ‘popish fooleries’ which still clung round the office, and afterwards spent some years at Geneva in close association with the great Reformer, John Calvin.

## I. THE SCOTTISH CONFESSION OF A.D. 1560.

The Reformed Church of Scotland was legally recognised and established by Parliament in 1560, and again more formally in 1567. In 1557 a body of Protestant nobles and gentlemen had bound themselves by the first of Scottish Covenants to maintain and defend what they called 'the Congregation of Christ' in opposition to the Roman Church. Their leaders were termed 'Lords of the Congregation,' and by them the Scottish Parliament was petitioned to 'abolish popery, to restore purity of worship and discipline, and to devote the ecclesiastical resources to the support of a pious clergy, the promotion of learning and the relief of the poor.' The Parliament demanded from the petitioners a Confession of their faith, and the reply was the Scottish Confession of 1560. It is said to have been drawn up in four days, but Knox, who no doubt had a chief part in the work, was not inexperienced in such matters, and probably the necessity of such a formula had for some time been occupying the minds of the ministers afterwards called upon to produce their Confession. It received the emphatic approval of the Scottish Parliament, which, a second time, seven years afterwards, as has been said, 'formally established the Reformed Church, by declaring the ministers of the blessed Evangel and the people of the realm professing Christ according to the Confession of Faith to be the only true and holy Kirk of Jesus Christ within this realm.' This Confession

History of the  
Scottish Con-  
fession of  
A.D. 1560.

continued in legal force until after the Revolution of 1688, for, though in 1647 the Westminster Confession was approved by the General Assembly and in 1649 by the Scottish Parliament, the royal sanction was not obtained until 1690 under William and Mary.

The Scottish Confession embraces twenty-five Articles, and 'exhibits,' as has been said, 'a clear, fresh and forcible summary of the orthodox Reformed Faith as this is held in common by Protestants of England, Switzerland, France and Holland.' The most recent account of it is that by the late Professor A. F. Mitchell of St. Andrews, in one of his Baird lectures on 'The Scottish Reformation.' The Confession covers the usual field surveyed in such documents, but three points in it may be specially noted, two of which will be generally regarded with approbation, while one, from the modern point of view, will be esteemed a defect. To begin with the last, Dr. Mitchell refers with regret to the 'unmeasured language of vituperation in which it, as well as the contemporary forms of recantation required of priests at that date, indulges when referring to the teaching of the members of the pre-Reformation Church.' He considers this almost a sufficient objection to reverting, as some have proposed to do, to this older formulary in place of the Westminster Confession. On the other hand, the notes of a true Church of Christ are clearly and forcibly given. They are not antiquity, or usurped title, lineal descent, place appointed nor multitude

Three features of the Confession of A. D. 1560—  
(1) The strong language regarding the pre-Reformation Church.

(2) The 'notes of a true Church.'

of men approving, but 'the true preaching of the Word of God,' 'the right administration of the Sacraments,' and 'ecclesiastical discipline uprightly administered as God's Word prescribes'—surely a most adequate definition and one which enables us to trace without hesitation or reserve what has been called the 'Apostolic Ministry in the Scottish Church.'<sup>1</sup> The third point to which we referred <sup>(3) The dis-</sup> is contained in the preface to the Confession. We <sup>claiming of</sup> protest, the authors say, 'that if any one will note <sup>infallibility.</sup> in this our Confession any article or sentence repugnant to God's Holy Word, that it would please him of his gentleness and for Christian charity's sake to admonish us of the same in writing; and we, upon our honour and fidelity, by God's grace, do promise unto him satisfaction from the mouth of God (that is, from the Holy Scriptures) or else reformation of that which he should prove to be amiss.' The late Dr. Schaff demurs to Dean Stanley's statement that this is the only Protestant Confession which, far in advance of its age, acknowledges its own fallibility. The First Confession of Basel adopted in 1534, as he points out, does the same in express words in the closing article, and the changes of the Augsburg Confession and of the English Articles imply, he considers, the recognition of their imperfection on the part of the authors. We saw in a previous chapter how two of the authors of the First Helvetic Confession of 1536 wished to add a

<sup>1</sup> R. H. Story, *The Apostolic Ministry in the Scottish Church*, 1897, p. 294.

caveat against the binding authority of such documents, and in the Second Helvetic Confession 'Bullinger distinctly recognises, in the spirit of Christian liberty and progress, the constant growth in the knowledge of the Word of God, and the consequent right of improvement in symbolical statements of the Christian Faith.'

The Covenants  
of 1581, 1638,  
1643.

Of the Scottish Covenants the most remarkable are the National Covenant of 1581, renewed in 1638, and the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643. The significance of the Solemn League and Covenant lies in its anti-episcopal protest. It aimed at uniformity of religion in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and formed 'the connecting link between Scotch Presbyterianism and English Puritanism, between the General Assembly and the Westminster Assembly, between the Scottish Parliament and the Long Parliament.' The history of the Covenanters, as the adherents of the Covenants were called, is one of the most heroic in the national annals of any people. On the other hand, the National Covenant of 1581, often called the Second Scottish Confession, is of doctrinal significance. It endorsed the Confession of 1560 and added a violent denunciation of the 'Roman Antichrist.' 'No other Protestant Confession,' it has been said, 'is so fiercely anti-Popish.' It was the work of John Craig, a colleague of Knox, and author of two Catechisms, the shorter of which was widely used in the Church of Scotland until superseded by the corresponding Westminster Catechism.



The renewal of the National Covenant in 1638—in the form to which the term National more particularly applies—marks what has been called the Second Reformation. The national subscribing of the Covenant began on the twenty-eighth of February in Greyfriars' Church in Edinburgh, in the presence of a dense crowd—60,000 people having flocked to the city from all parts of the kingdom. These Covenants can hardly be classed as *Creeeds*, but they are at least notable landmarks in the religious development of the Scottish nation.

## II. THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION

We now turn to the last, and in some respects the greatest, of the Reformed Confessions, that prepared by the Westminster Assembly of Divines.

'The English Puritans, the Scottish Covenanters, and the French Huguenots,' it has been suggestively remarked, 'were alike spiritual descendants of Calvin, and represent, with different national characteristics, the same heroic faith and severe discipline. They were alike animated by the fear of God, which made them strong and free. They bowed reverently before His Holy Word, but before no human authority. In their eyes God alone was great.'

It is impossible to attempt even a sketch of the long struggle between Puritanism and the Church of England, which in its later stages was complicated with the political struggle between King and Parlia-

The West-  
minster  
Assembly.

Its real  
object—  
ecclesiastical  
uniformity in  
England,  
Scotland, and  
Ireland.

Scotland's  
representa-  
tives.

ment. In 1642 the episcopate and the liturgy alike were overthrown. In the same year the Civil War broke out. The Long Parliament, which had met in 1640, assumed the control of civil and ecclesiastical affairs. In 1643 it summoned the famous Assembly which, though formally convened to settle the government and liturgy of the Church of England, was really designed to frame a uniform system of doctrine, worship, and discipline for the three kingdoms. Its members were selected by Parliament, which also prescribed the topics to be discussed. The Episcopalians nominated, with two or three exceptions, declined to take part in the Assembly. The Independents had eight or ten representatives, the Erastians a similar number, while the great bulk of the Assembly consisted of Presbyterians. Scotland was represented by four ministers and two laymen ; others were nominated, but do not appear to have been present. At their head was Alexander Henderson, the author of the Solemn League and Covenant, and among them was Samuel Rutherford, author of the famous Letters and at that time Principal of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews. The actual membership of the Assembly was about one hundred and fifty, including thirty lay assessors, the general attendance ranging probably from fifty to eighty. The place of meeting after the first few weeks was the Jerusalem Chamber in Westminster Abbey, where the Revised Version of the Bible, of 1881-86, was also prepared. The Assembly was opened on 1st July

1643 ; most of its labours were completed in about five and a half years, but it maintained a shadowy existence till March 1652, after which it ceased to meet. All the accounts of the Assembly ascribe to it a character of learning and dignity, of calmness in deliberation, and of patience and sobriety of judgment, which probably excelled that of any similar Assembly which had ever met. By the propriety of its proceedings and the manifest earnestness with which it applied itself to the responsible task entrusted to it, it secured the respect even of those who disapproved alike of its existence and decisions.

Character of  
the Assembly.

It began with a revision of the Thirty-nine Articles, but when it had dealt with fifteen of these, it was instructed to turn to the possibly more urgent questions of Liturgy and Polity. Accordingly the 'Directory for Public Worship' was completed and laid before Parliament in 1644, and the 'Form of Presbyterial Church Government' was submitted the following year. Both were approved, except in some points of detail, by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1645. When the doctrinal work was resumed, it took another form in consequence of an order 'to frame a Confession of Faith for the three kingdoms, according to the Solemn League and Covenant.' A committee was appointed in 1644 to undertake this task, which with great care and deliberation was carried through ; and in December 1646, a little more than two years after its inception, the completed Confession was presented to both Houses of Parliament

The work ac-  
complished—

- (1) 'Directory  
for Public  
Worship,'  
1644.  
(2) 'Form of  
Presbyterial  
Church  
Government,'  
1645.

(3) 'Con-  
fession of  
Faith,' 1646.

The Con-  
fession adopted  
by the Church  
of Scotland,  
1647.

Ratified by the  
Scottish Parlia-  
ment, 1649.

under the title of 'The Humble Advice of the Assembly of Divines, now by authority of Parliament sitting at Westminster, concerning a Confession of Faith, with the Quotations and Texts of Scripture annexed.' The House of Commons, it is said, considered it chapter by chapter, and altered the title into 'Articles of Christian Religion approved and passed by both Houses of Parliament after advice had with the Assembly of Divines by authority of Parliament sitting at Westminster.' In Scotland it was at once adopted. The General Assembly of 1647, after careful examination, declared it 'to be most agreeable to the Word of God, and in nothing contrary to the received doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this Kirk,' and thankfully acknowledged the great mercy of the Lord, 'in that so excellent a Confession of Faith is prepared, and thus far agreed upon in both kingdoms.' The action of the General Assembly was followed by the ratification and approval of the Confession by the Scottish Parliament in February 1649.

It is familiar history that the main object with which the Westminster Standards were prepared, and on account of which Scotland was so readily induced to supersede her own approved Confession, viz. the uniformity of religious belief and practice in the three kingdoms, remained unattained. As an indigenous plant, the Westminster Confession was a failure, while as an exotic, it has flourished; the product of English Puritanism has become the standard of Presbyterianism throughout the world.

It has been observed that, in respect of the amount of time spent upon them, and the deliberate manner in which they were prepared, the Westminster Standards present the nearest Protestant parallel to the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent. They were sufficiently removed also from the Reformation times to admit of the subsidence of that bitterness of controversy which in the earlier period was scarcely ever absent from any allusion to Rome. By this date Protestant theology 'had been more thoroughly formulated, and was capable of being more calmly, more broadly, more conclusively stated.' The divines were no doubt well acquainted with the best results of Continental theology, upon which they drew largely for their material; although in form the Westminster Confession is not framed on any Continental model, nor even on that of the Scottish Confession. It follows rather the order of the English Articles, and both in the arrangement and the titles of its chapters, in phraseology and in its treatment of the most prominent features of Calvinism, it follows closely the lines of the Irish Articles of 1615. It consists of thirty-three chapters. 'It commences with the Bible as the source and foundation of all belief; then proceeds with the doctrine of Scripture concerning God in His being and attributes, purposes and administration, providential and moral; then discusses the creation, the character and fall of man, with the consequences of the fall; and then presents Christ in His Person and in His mediatorial work in its main

The Westminster Confession more systematic than earlier Protestant Symbols.

The Westminster Confession is based upon the Irish Articles.

The order of subjects is strictly logical—The Scriptures; God; creation; man; sin; Christ.

Salvation; the moral law.

Sacraments; the Church; Church and State, etc.

(4, 5) The two Catechisms.

aspects and issues. From these fundamental positions it proceeds to discuss such saving truth in its more practical relations—to set forth the plan of salvation as illustrated in the various phases and experiences of the Christian life, and also to expound the moral law as the rule of life, and present the duties which naturally spring into view on that basis, and are legitimately required of all who believe in Christ. These discussions are followed by an exposition of the sacraments and the Church, of the relations of the Church to the State, of the authority of Councils, and the rights and limits of Church discipline; and the whole is concluded with two chapters, following the order of the Apostles' Creed, on death and the intermediate life, resurrection and the final judgment.'

Along with the Confession of Faith, the Westminster Assembly set about the preparation of a Catechism, but afterwards resolved to prepare two Catechisms, for the instruction respectively of the young and those who were further advanced in age and knowledge. In an earlier chapter we have seen what an impulse had been given to such methods by the success of Luther's Smaller Catechism and of the Heidelberg Catechism. The Westminster Catechisms were not presented to Parliament until after the completion of the Confession of Faith, in order that there might be harmony among these various standards. At the same time, the method pursued in the Catechisms is somewhat simpler and more natural than that

of the Confession. Their teaching is divided into two main sections—Belief and Duty, the latter including an elaborate exposition of the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. The Catechisms hold equal authority with the Confession in the Presbyterian Churches. Further, they have what has been noted as a peculiarity in such compositions, that 'each answer embodies the question and thus forms a complete proposition or sentence in itself.' They date from 1647, and were approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in the following year. In 1649, the same Act of the Scottish Parliament which approved the Confession likewise approved the Larger and Shorter Catechisms and the Assembly's Acts of approbation of them, and ordained them 'to be recorded, published and practised.'

Two main sections in the Catechisms—Belief, Duty.

It is remarkable that such work should have been done with the clamour and distraction of civil war all around. Its excellences have been frequently pointed out and commended—its theological ability, its clearness and precision, its strong, dignified style, its endeavour to conform to Scripture, and its studied moderation with regard to difficult questions. Where points 'seem to conflict or cannot be harmonised by our finite intelligence—as absolute sovereignty and free agency, the fall of Adam and personal guilt, the infinite divinity and the finite humanity of Christ—both truths are set forth, and room is left for explanations and adjustments by scientific theology within the general limits of the

Appreciation of the Westminster Standards.

Objection—  
They are more  
intellectual  
than religious.

Compared  
with contem-  
porary docu-  
ments, they  
are tolerant.

system.’<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, it is urged with no little justice that the Westminster Standards are too one-sidedly intellectual, and leave too little room for the play of emotion and the mystical element which enters into all true religion. The Reformation symbols are less logical and precise, but more fresh and elastic. The Westminster Standards are accused also of intolerance, of advocating persecuting principles. To that charge, it is a sufficient answer that, compared with other documents of the same or the preceding age, they are moderately expressed, and that if they go further than modern enlightenment will follow them, we may yet be one with them in that zeal for truth and righteousness which led their authors to take up the position which they did. ‘The Assembly,’ says Professor Mitchell in the Introduction to his edition of its Minutes, ‘by limiting obedience to the lawful commands of civil and ecclesiastical authority, by limiting lawful commands in matters of faith and worship to things positively enjoined in the Word of God, or by fair inference deducible from it, and by recognising the right of the civil authority to form an independent judgment in things religious, helped to forward the cause of freedom both in Church and State, and to plant the seed from which, as the Word of God was better studied, a fully developed system of toleration could not fail to grow.’

<sup>1</sup> Schaff, *History of the Creeds*, p. 788



## CHAPTER XII

### COMPARISON OF CREEDS

#### I. ANCIENT AND MODERN CREEDS

It may be well at this point to indicate the manner in which what is known as Comparative Symbolics, or the Comparative Study of Creeds, may be undertaken, and to point out, at any rate, the broadest of its results and uses.

1. The first and most obvious distinction which strikes us on a general survey of the history of Creeds is one of form. The ancient Creeds, as compared with the Reformation and post-Reformation Confessions, are 'brief, terse, pointed, stating simply what is most central and omitting much which subsequent Confessions have sought to state or to expand.' They move within the lines of the great catholic doctrines of the trinity and the Person of Christ. No doubt the controversies about sin and grace, associated with the great name of St. Augustine, and about the atonement, where in like manner St. Anselm was the pioneer of the more complete and rational discussion, had not yet arisen. But when these controversies did arise, they failed to shake, as Arianism for example had done, the very foundations of the Church, which felt itself able to deal with them by means of

The ancient  
Creeds are  
shorter.

Their themes  
are limited to  
the trinity and  
Person of  
Christ.

its own authority and discipline and the learning and ability of its great writers. There was little necessity, therefore, for throwing its decisions into symbolic form. When the power of the Church, however, was broken, it was felt that the ancient Creeds were altogether inadequate; that it was necessary to settle points which they had left open, and where most dangerous error might enter in.

They are expressions of individual faith.

2. The ancient Symbols, again, are the expressions of individual faith. In the West, as we saw, they are uniformly constructed in the singular number, 'I believe.' The explanation of the contrary practice in the East was that the Creed was the utterance of a Council. Still, especially when used as a baptismal formula, it also had reference to the individual. But the Confessions of later times were manifestos of communities. 'They represent the conviction not of Christian men as Christian men, but of Churches as Churches.' They have therefore been usually imposed not upon the individual members of Churches, but upon those entrusted with ministerial functions and responsibilities, in order to regulate their official utterances and actions. They assume, of course, that those who are fully instructed in religious and theological thought will, and cannot but, adopt the conclusions they express.

The later Confessions are manifestos of Churches.

They are therefore for Church officials, in the first place.

3. Again, the ancient Symbols were in a real sense marks and indications of Church unity; the modern Confessions, on the other hand, set

forth the divergence of Churches from one another as distinctly as they indicate the agreement among the members of the several Churches.

4. The ancient Creeds were embodied in the Church's liturgies and formed part of its usual worship, while the Confessions are more of the nature of theological treatises, adapted neither by style, length, nor contents for any direct association with worship. Modern Churches generally make some use of the ancient Creeds for this purpose, proclaiming by the act that however age may differ from age, and Church from Church, in many things there is a catholicity which unites them, a catholicity of spirit as well as acknowledgment of the fundamental verities of the Christian faith. This unity was explicitly acknowledged in many of the later documents, as, for instance, in the Confession of Calvin, prepared for the French Church in 1559: 'On all the articles which have been decided by ancient Councils touching the infinite spiritual essence of God, and the distinction of the three Persons, and the union of two natures in one Lord Jesus Christ, we receive and agree in all that was therein resolved, as being drawn from the Holy Scripture.'

The ancient Creeds are recited in worship; the modern cannot be.

The ancient Creeds are of the Church Catholic; the modern of the several Churches.

## II. DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENT OF DIFFERENT CHURCHES

While there is indeed a common element in all Creeds, the doctrinal development of different Churches and of the different ages of the world has

Greek and  
Roman  
differences.

Lutheran and  
Reformed  
Churches—  
Sacramental  
doctrine the  
chief differ-  
ence.

Regarding  
redemption,  
Luther and  
Calvin are  
practically one.

resulted, as we have seen, in a wide divergence, and necessitates a careful discrimination between their teaching, not only in details, but in reference to the principles on which these depend. Even the Greek and Roman Churches, which approach more nearly a doctrinal unanimity than almost any others, differ in certain points of doctrine as well as in constitution and practice. They differ, in fact, in their whole attitude towards doctrine, which, as we have seen, is less rigid on the Greek than on the Roman side. Between the Roman and the Protestant Churches, on the other hand, the differences are numerous and profound. The place and authority of Scripture, the objects of worship, the nature of justification, the sacraments, and purgatory, form only a few of the many vital points which separate the great Communion for which the Council of Trent legislated from the adherents of Luther and Calvin. Between the Lutherans and Calvinists themselves, the points of difference are as few and inconsiderable as the gulf which divides both from Romanism is deep and wide. They affect chiefly the sacramental doctrine—baptism being, according to Luther, a means of regeneration and necessary for salvation, consubstantiation expressing his view of the Lord's Supper, and a peculiar theory of Christ's body, as we saw, having been adopted by him in the interest of this sacramental doctrine. On all the great principles of redemption, in its beginnings, process, and end, Luther and Calvin are practically at one. So, when we come to examine

the Reformed Confessions, we find that 'they present the same system of Christian doctrine. They are variations of one theme. . . . The difference is confined to minor details, and the extent to which the Augustinian and Calvinistic principles are carried out; in other words, the difference is theological, not religious, and logical rather than theological.' They belong, in fact, to the same family—but they differ as children of the same family differ. They naturally reflect the peculiar circumstances which gave them birth. By addition or omission, by development in this or that direction, they preserve their individuality, they enunciate their special testimony, while, in subordination to the Word of God, they illustrate the infinite variety of human thought and faith.

Between Reformed Confessions differences are slight.

The differences are theological, not religious.

Of the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, it has been remarked that 'in them as in a mirror we may almost see the entire doctrinal process of Protestantism making itself confessionally manifest.' Almost everything that was to be found in the best Reformed formularies was incorporated in them. They embodied also the results of theological thought and inquiry subsequent to the later symbols of other lands and Churches. With the exception of the Second Helvetic, the Westminster Confession is the longest and most comprehensive of all the Reformed symbols. 'It also represents not only the broadened and clarified vision of the Saxon mind of the seventeenth century, but in a remarkable degree anticipates the evolution of Christian

The Westminster Standards incorporate the best in all the Reformed Standards.

doctrine in subsequent periods . . . occasionally reaching out beforehand by a species of prescience, and giving expression to divine truth in forms which meet, with wonderful fitness, the issues and questions, the heresies, and the unbeliefs of more recent times.'

Profoundly  
spiritual  
section of the  
Westminster  
Confession.

We have already spoken of the perhaps too dominant intellectualism of the Westminster Standards. Yet they are not without a spiritual and practical quality. 'No such description,' it has been said, 'of genuine Christian experience in its various stages can be found elsewhere in Protestant Symbols, as appears in the group of nine chapters in the Westminster Confession beginning with Effectual Calling and ending with the Assurance of Grace and Salvation. These chapters present the great theme in most tender and impressive style, with a measure of fulness which leaves no important element untouched, with a remarkable profoundness of insight into the nature of man and the operations of the Spirit upon and within man, yet with a crystalline plainness that renders them intelligible even to a child—illustrating strikingly the aphorism of Milton, that in matters of religion, "he is learnedest who is plainest."'

Most Creeds  
contribute  
something of  
value.

Thus in form rather than in contents, in degree rather than in kind, in proportion rather than in character, Creeds differ from one another, while most of them present some neglected truth, and contribute something to the elucidation of Scripture and to the edification and guidance of all Christian souls.

## CHAPTER XIII

### GENERAL RESULTS OF HISTORICAL SURVEY

WE must now touch upon certain more or less practical aspects of the subject which has engaged our attention, taking as our starting-point the considerations which may be fairly deduced from, if they have not indeed been forced upon us by, our historical survey.

What these in the main are may be briefly stated:—

I. Just as in the ocean we can trace various currents distinguishable, by direction, velocity, temperature and other characteristics, from the surrounding waters, without its being possible to separate these currents from the general body of the waters, or even to preserve them from being influenced or perhaps contaminated by their surroundings, so in the great ocean of the world's thought and life. We have seen that it is possible to distinguish a current to which we give the name of Christian, in the case of which, however, separation, absolute isolation, is as impossible as in that of the ocean currents. Its characteristic features it derives from Christ, from the Scriptures, especially those of the New Testament, and because of them it receives its name ; but many elements enter into

I. The *stream* of Christian thought is not wholly pure.

it, and many influences drawn from other sources affect it. To get it absolutely pure in transmission and interpretation is impossible, and it shades off by imperceptible gradations into the non-christian and the antichristian. It is this stream or current of thought which is continuous, however much it may expand or diminish in volume, however much it may vary, as we might say, in density. It is this variable thought which takes shape in the mind of the individual or the community, is embodied in systems of thought, and is crystallised into Creeds. To vary the illustration, Christian thought is like the nebula which astronomers discover in space, distinguishable by its luminosity, holding in its heart a blazing sun, from which a great part of its light is derived by reflection, and here and there concentrated into satellites, which reflect the central luminosity and help to diffuse its radiance. So Christian thought, as we have seen, is vague in outline and composite in nature; it is determined in its peculiar quality by the central position accorded to the Scriptures and Him to whom the Scriptures testify; the Creeds are its concentration, reflecting, but imperfectly reflecting, the central light because of their distance from it and the material of which they are inevitably composed; and it is this thought, thus conditioned, on which every individual and every community has to draw in ordering their religious conceptions. It is the atmosphere which we breathe, which we cannot escape or transcend. This seems to be the

Christian thought is like an astronomical nebula.

The conditioning of Christian thought by every age.



truth contained in the Catholic doctrine of Tradition. Our views are, and cannot but be, a product of the great Christian tradition which is handed down from age to age in oral instruction and in the writings of the great Christian thinkers, is illustrated by the instructions of the Church, and is guarded especially by its formal declarations of faith. The error, on the other hand, of the Catholic doctrine, is to ignore the fact that tradition left to itself necessarily in the course of time becomes less and less trustworthy, that it needs to be brought to the test of a permanent record such as we have in Scripture, and compared with its primitive form, that mistakes may be corrected and truth restored. What was originally meant by Tradition we can learn from the fact that peculiar authority was in early times attached to the occupants of apostolic sees, that is, the bishoprics which were believed to have been originally held by apostles; it was naturally supposed that they would have the most direct and reliable account of what the apostles had taught. But when lapse of time had made such tradition valueless, there were substituted for it utterances which antiquity had never sanctioned, but which were still called by the same name. The point is that from Tradition we can never free ourselves, that Scripture itself is so far seen by us through the medium of it, but that Scripture furnishes us with the means of purifying and correcting it, as the lungs purify the blood which the heart forces through them, yet without necessarily

The Roman doctrine of 'Tradition.'

Tradition without an original record as standard becomes less and less reliable.

Original authority of 'Tradition.'

Creeds and contemporary Christian thought.

removing every noxious element. Our Creed, which is the reflective concentration of our religious thought, is in this view just that interpretation of Scripture which our place in the continuous stream of Christian thought enables us to give.

2. All Creeds are imperfect.

2. That all Creeds are imperfect and contain an admixture of error with the truth they set forth is one of the most obvious conclusions from their history. We have seen their numbers and variety, the manner of their development, how they have been altered and amended, how one has superseded another, how they have been improved and still remain admittedly capable of further improvement. No persons, as we have seen, were in general more conscious of their imperfection than those who laboured at their construction. The noble and touching words of the authors of the Scottish Confession which were quoted in a foregoing chapter show that the utmost which could be claimed for such compositions was no more than that all possible care and faithfulness had been bestowed upon them. If any Creed could claim exemption from the general law of fallibility it would be that known to us as the Apostles' Creed, which we saw could in a somewhat briefer form be traced back to the very verge of the apostolic age. Had the apostles delivered any formulary of the kind, however, it is incredible that no more reliable tradition of the fact should be accessible, and the subsequent history of the Creed with its numerous modifications would be unintelligible. Of the other ancient

The Apostles' Creed has been modified.

Creeds the most that can be said is that they dealt with the subjects treated of in them in the best way that the knowledge and insight of their age permitted. The Reformers accepted them, not purely on authority, but as conformable to Scripture. But for the latter consideration no antiquity would have saved them from rejection. This is not to say that as ancient and venerable documents they are not precious in our eyes. The Protestant position, however, as was stated at the outset, undoubtedly is that Creeds are not of themselves infallible, or even authoritative, except in so far as a consideration of the facts as to their origin, nature and contents leads us to ascribe authority to them. We do not, apart from an examination of their intrinsic character, place them on any pedestal of pre-eminence, or invest them with mystic sanctity. We reverence them ; they are helps to us in the formation of our own belief ; and when they are the product of our own age, the standards of our own Church, they have certain practical uses which will presently fall to be considered. The Creeds of former ages, on the other hand, though they may have a great historical interest, may exert little practical influence. They are the reflection of the age in which they move, an age whose knowledge, modes of thought, degree of civilisation may have been very different from our own. Both in horizon and in proportion our view of truth may be very different from theirs. And the very terminology of Creeds—the language in which they are expressed—is confessedly inadequate.

The Reformers valued Creeds only as conforming to Scripture.

By modern Protestants they are estimated at their intrinsic value.

The language of Creeds is confessedly inadequate.

quate to the purposes to which it is put. We saw how the Greek Fathers found difficulty in getting words to express clearly and unambiguously their thoughts as to person and substance, for example, in the doctrine of the trinity, how they had to be content with terms which approximated to the intended meaning. Yet when the formula was completed, men came to accept it as a perfect and final utterance upon the great subject with which it was concerned. Rightly understood, it is probably the best formula that has yet been devised, but to understand it we must know its history, and its history reveals how much there is about it that is tentative and approximate.

3. Creeds are *intended* to be true interpretations of Scripture.

3. Creeds, therefore, can never be regarded as the pure and unadulterated product of Scripture and of the Revelation of God in Christ, of which Scripture is the medium and the record. They are to be regarded as the product of a thought-situation, of a condition of mind in the formation of which Scripture is no doubt the controlling, though not the only operative force. For these and other reasons, Creeds are necessarily imperfect and inadequate, as their history and their frequent variations and even contradictions show them to be. Nevertheless, Creeds have been designed by those who framed and used them as faithful interpretations of the truth of Scripture. It was to Scripture that the ancient writers appealed in behalf of the Baptismal Creed and the Rule of Faith; by Scripture, that they meant these to be tested and judged. Even where,

as in the case of the term *homoousios*, they used language which was not found in Scripture, it was chosen with the direct purpose of summarising in a clear and convenient form what was believed to be the teaching of Scripture on the subject of the Godhead. The desire to be scriptural was as clearly manifested by those who constructed the Reformation and post-Reformation Confessions. It is conspicuous in the Westminster Confession, where, as we saw in a preceding chapter, both sides of difficult questions are frankly given, without any attempt to reconcile them, because they seem to be plainly stated in Scripture and to be left there unreconciled. The framers of these documents could not indeed divest themselves of the prepossession which their previous experience and training caused them to bring to the interpretation of Scripture, and they could only read and interpret Scripture as it was understood in their own day; but, given these limitations, they submitted themselves unreservedly to its guidance.<sup>1</sup>

The conditions under which our predecessors thus laboured are those under which men labour still, from which indeed they can never be altogether free. We start from the culture and enlightenment of our own day and generation, and not of any other

<sup>1</sup> The resolve to be scriptural was, in fact, a pledge to which the framers of the Westminster Confession mutually bound themselves in the words publicly recited at the beginning of each week of their sessions: 'I do seriously promise and vow in the presence of Almighty God that in this Assembly whereof I am a member I will maintain nothing in point of doctrine but what I believe to be most agreeable to the Word of God.'—J. M.

age. We profit by the lessons of the past, but one of the most emphatic of these lessons is that the result of our efforts can never be final, incapable of correction and improvement. There was truth in the first of such efforts which man made; there will be more and higher truth, a clearer vision, a deeper understanding, in the last. And to Scripture we still must go in the framing of any new symbol, or in testing one already in existence. It may be that we are on the threshold of a new understanding of the Bible. This is not the place to discuss questions of criticism, and we have no wish to complicate our task here with such questions. It is not necessary, for it is not the modern school of biblical scholars only who tell us that the Bible has regions of yet undiscovered truth, that the Master has that to say to us which we have not yet been able to bear. And with every new view of the Bible, some modification of the Creed which is its interpretation must result. If therefore the promise is fulfilled that by the new studies the Bible itself shall be made a new and more living book to us, there must follow a loftier and worthier Creed. 'A true perspective of ancient history,' it has been recently said, 'has been secured, and this with such benefit to Christianity, which is emphatically a historical religion, that Delitzsch has pronounced the historical spirit to be the special *charisma* which God has given to the modern Church. . . . The materials have been gathered for a far wider theological synthesis than any that has ever yet been attempted—a synthesis in

The increase of biblical knowledge may produce modification in new Creeds.

which no spiritual treasure which has been garnered by the toil of previous generations will be lost, but in which a wider and grander view of the universe and the purpose of God will be given to the delighted vision of the lovers of truth.' The investigations of biblical theology especially are bringing us face to face with the biblical writers and enabling us to delimit their circles of thought. We acquire thus a more truly historical view of Scripture, noting the stages in the development of revelation within it; and the result, when the investigations are complete, cannot but leave its mark on the general system of theological thought, and upon any Creed-construction or Creed-revision which may yet be undertaken.

# CHAPTER XIV

## PRACTICAL QUESTIONS

### I. NATURE OF A CREED

Is a Creed  
necessary?

CAN we not dispense with Creeds altogether? That is the first question which meets us, and one which in our day many are asking.

Yes. The  
individual  
seeks to clarify  
his belief by  
formulating it.

If religion were a matter for the individual alone, and consisted merely in the perception of truth and the acquisition of knowledge, the reply might be given in the affirmative. Even then the individual Christian would be anxious to make his faith and hope clear to himself, by expressing them, and the grounds on which he holds them, in intellectual forms, and by reducing these in turn to some kind of system. We are all theologians up to a certain point and cannot but be so if we think about religion at all. But religion is also a *social* thing. One man finds his experience repeated in that of another, and is himself strengthened and confirmed in his conviction thereby. But it is obvious that thus to compare experiences they must be expressed or described. And it is impossible, either on the one ground or on the other, to rest in a vague religious sentiment.

Further, the religious community exists for *other* purposes. Men worship together and act together



in manifold ways. But for common worship and action there is needed a common understanding. The beliefs which lie at the root of the life of a Church must have a certain affinity and resemblance throughout its membership. The uniformity may exist only to a certain point, but common action cannot result from endless diversity. The Creed which is the formulated belief thus becomes the bond of union within the Church, if at the same time it also becomes the note of separation from all that is without. Not only therefore for its own satisfaction and instruction, but as a witness to others, the Church must put on record the principles on which it is founded. Nor is this course less necessary for the instruction of the young and ignorant within its own borders. Thus we get what has been defined as the threefold function of Creeds—namely, explanation, communication, vindication, ‘holding the truth, teaching the truth, and witnessing and protesting on behalf of the truth.’ ‘Under the pressure of such necessities, external and internal,’ it has been remarked, ‘the Christian Church has been constrained in every age to mould or to proclaim its conscious faith in forms sufficiently full and definite to meet from time to time its growing needs. The question whether it could maintain its existence without such formularies is practically answered by the historic fact that (as a rule) it has never chosen to exist without them, and by the further fact that the periods in which it has been most indifferent to Creeds have invariably been

The community needs it as a bond of union for common worship and action.

A Creed also marks off one community from others.

Periods of indifference to Creeds, periods of lethargy or error.

periods of decline into lethargy or into error. . . . Churches which have no creeds, or but slight or vague creeds, too often find that the liabilities from which they suppose themselves to be free are far less significant than the evils to which their comparatively creedless condition exposes them.'

## II. RELATION OF CREEDS TO THE BIBLE

The Bible is not a substitute for a Creed.

But is there, it will next be asked, any need for going beyond the Bible itself? Is not acknowledgment of adherence to Scripture amply sufficient as a bond of union for the Christian community or Church? Unfortunately, as a matter of history, it has not been found so. The earliest heretics, the Gnostics for example, appealed to the Scriptures as confidently as did the orthodox. One of the earliest and strongest impulses to the formation of Creeds has been found in this tendency. We know how many diverse religious teachers and communities have cited Scripture warrant for their views. Even the devil, it has been said, can quote Scripture for his purpose. When we consider the multitude of phases of human experience which the sacred pages describe, the prepossessions which the readers of the Bible oftentimes bring to their reading, and the wholly unsystematic way in which the teaching of the Bible appears in its pages—now in aphorism, now in argument, now in the form of narrative, now of poetry—it must be apparent how vague as an index of religious belief must be a mere

For both heretics and orthodox appeal to the Bible.

The teaching of the Bible is unsystematic.

declaration of standing by the Bible. The question at once arises—In what *sense* do you understand the Bible, how far is your adherence to the letter, how far to the Spirit? The answer to this question involves all the essential elements of a Creed. Creeds, according at least to all Protestant conceptions of them, are subordinate to the Bible. They are not substitutes for it; they do not intentionally add anything to it, or take anything from it. They are helps to the understanding of it, and they are means by which man may learn from man, and Church from Church, how far they are agreed in the interpretation of it in matters which concern their highest interests, and how far they can co-operate in the work which lies before them.

Creeds are subordinate to the Bible, but are a practical necessity.

### III. CREEDS—THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE COMMUNITY

If, then, a Creed is necessary for the Church, for any community of Christians, in order that they may edify one another, and give mutual aid in the execution of their common duties; and if the Bible pure and simple is not suited to supply its place, the next point that arises is the character of the formulary which will best fulfil the requirements of the case. The problem is to provide such a statement of faith as the community may use without sacrificing definiteness and comprehensiveness, while yet the individual can accept it without loss of liberty or injury to conscience.

A Church's Creed must be comprehensive yet acceptable to the individual.

In view of the diversity of human character and

Difficulty of  
'many men,  
many minds.'

mental constitution, the varied training and experience of men, *can* a number of individuals be expected to acquiesce in any formula which goes beyond the simplest elements? In other departments it is not found impossible: in politics, for instance, and in many societies and associations, men find themselves able to live and act together while differing very considerably as to the details even of those objects which the association has been formed to promote. Should there be more incompatibility between the belief of an individual member of a Church and what may be called the corporate belief, that which is expressed in the Creed or Confession of the Church to which he belongs? In the strictest sense, no doubt, a man's belief includes only that which he has not only received, but assimilated and appropriated—what has become part of his mind, of his very being, a power of action, a standard of truth. Between this and simple intellectual assent there are many degrees. We may illustrate the fact by the difference between the Christian trust in a Father in heaven, and acquiescence in an *a priori* argument for the existence of God grounded on the nature of the notions of space and time. But such deep personal conviction as we are now referring to must generally be intense in proportion to the limitation of its range. It is almost impossible then, looking to the varying constitution of men's minds, that a man should hold every doctrine in a Confession with the same force of individual persuasion, although he may nevertheless be dis-

The variety of  
assent, from  
belief to  
acquiescence.

Different  
articles will  
command  
different  
degrees of  
assent.

posed to give to all a more or less warm and intelligent adhesion. Some will be to him more than others living and life-giving. As St. Paul reminds the Corinthians, 'When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation'—each, that is, had some contribution which he could make to the common stock, some mode in which he could edify the congregation; or, as the same Apostle reminds the Romans, the one body consists of many members, of which all have not the same office, yet all minister to the common welfare! So in regard to the question of belief, the various convictions of individuals, differing, overlapping not coinciding, in so far as they are not incompatible, contribute to the body of belief in virtue of which the Church lives and acts. It is only so far as the individual is possessed by a truth that he can say, 'I believed, therefore have I spoken.' It is only as there is a force of conviction in a community, though not necessarily held in its entirety by every one of its members, that the community can declare, 'We also believe, and therefore speak.'

Scarcely any one will dispute that so far as we have power over the forming of our beliefs, we should do so with open mind. We cannot tell from what quarter truth may come to us, truth which the soul will at once recognise, to which it will spring with an affinity like that of the needle for the magnet, truth which may be made effective for our own life and for that of the world. The belief must be the resultant

The formation  
of our beliefs.

of all the influences which can be brought to bear upon it, and we cannot arbitrarily shut out any.

But we must also acknowledge that there may be *degrees* in belief, in the tenacity with which we hold the doctrinal statements, corresponding to the nature of the grounds or evidence on account of which they are accepted. Not that it ever ceases to be real belief. We may cling to the highest that we know, while ready to accept a higher when it is revealed to us. But it often seems as if we were expected to maintain with equal stringency every article of the faith we acknowledge. May not the grounds on which we hold one point be much more complete and satisfactory, and leave less room for possible error, than those on which we hold another, while yet we admit the latter to be adequate? Has not a conclusion founded on the widest basis, such, for example, as the love or wisdom of God, to which the constitution of nature, the course of history, the testimony of Scripture, the experience of redemption alike point, a very different claim upon our attention from that of an inference from one or two texts of Scripture, themselves perhaps of doubtful interpretation? Or again, however strongly some particular view may be held by an individual here and there, does not the fact that there is no general consensus in its favour stamp it as, probably at least, of *minor* import? Every such genuine conviction is, as we have seen, a real force, a force to be reckoned with. But as in the heavens there are forces which make themselves felt only in the aber-

The grounds  
for acceptance  
of different  
doctrines vary  
in sufficiency.

ration of a planet, while others keep it in its orbit round the sun ; so it is in the mental and spiritual world. This recognition of degree in belief, of a proportion in the articles of our Creed, would, if generally admitted, obviate many difficulties, and would make possible a sympathy and common action among men of widely differing views. It would enable us at such a time as ours, when doubts and questionings meet us on all hands, when it is impossible to tell what the issue of the conflict may be, to maintain a calm and patient spirit, not to be panic-stricken and paralysed. A man does not deny or doubt the truths of religion because he ranges them in a certain order according to strength of evidence and vital importance. For all, he may put forth his plea ; on all, he may ground his action, though with greater force and vehemence in this case than in that ; and those who are one in the grand features of their faith may well unite their energies for the conversion and regeneration of the world.

Hence again a gradation in the articles of our Creed.

If the two principles now explained be just—that a man believes, in the full sense of ‘believing,’ only what he has assimilated and made his own, and that he does not require to accept all the articles of the common Creed in the same degree, but may hold them with varying degrees of conviction—provided only that he does not consciously *reject* any portion of that Creed, there is nothing to prevent him uniting, with the fullest liberty and without any injury to conscience, in accepting and

Practical advantage of this gradation of belief.

maintaining the common Creed, and in making it the basis of the work and of the guidance of the common life.

#### IV. THE CREED AND THE COMMUNITY

Problems raised.

How to test uniformity of belief.

Are office-bearers and ordinary members to be identically tested?

If now we consider the constitution of the religious community itself, problems of another kind come into view. In so far as the Church is based upon uniformity of doctrine and faith, steps must be taken to ascertain that such uniformity exists, and, it may be, to secure that it should be preserved. Once organised, the instinct of self-preservation comes into play, and the Church seeks to defend itself against subjectivity and caprice. Further we distinguish in the Church, as an organised body, not only the association itself and the individual members composing it, but a differentiation of function and functionaries — in other words, we have in it office-bearers of different orders. It is usually from the teachers and office-bearers of the Church and not from the general body of its members that assent to the common Creed has been required. It is obviously upon them that the preservation of its distinctive character and testimony depends. Should the members of the Church disagree with its doctrinal basis, they can leave its communion. The days of persecution are over ; the Church does not forcibly impose its beliefs upon the people, it only invites those who are in sympathy with them to join themselves to it. Theoretically the case is



the same with the office-bearers, who if they cannot serve the Church loyally may leave its ranks, unless indeed they can bring the Church over to the point of view they have been led to adopt, when of course there will once more be sympathy between them.

But here the problem is complicated by one or other, it may be both, of two conditions. Neither of them is essentially involved in it; both touch it only accidentally and externally; yet by their connection with it, they greatly increase its gravity from a practical point of view. These conditions are, first, the fact that most Churches require a trained and educated ministry, and secondly, the possession of status or property—particularly in the case of Churches established by law. The setting apart of a special class of men for the work of the ministry brings many advantages with it, but not a few dangers and difficulties. For not only may the livelihood of the man who has gone through a long course of preparation depend on his continuance in his ministerial office, but also the very opportunity of engaging in a species of work for which he may be genuinely fitted, and for which he has a real inclination. Demission of office on any change of religious views is no longer a simple process, nor is extrusion on the part of the Church one that is set about with a light heart, or carried through without difficulty. Then, just as the freedom of the office-bearer to abandon any important part of the common Creed is limited by such circumstances, the freedom of the Church as a whole to alter its Confession in

The case of  
the trained  
and paid  
office-bearer.

The com-  
munity's power  
to alter its  
Confession.

any serious manner, or, what is practically the same thing, to allow any important part of it to fall into desuetude, is subject to limitation. It is limited by any kind of compact regarding the Confession which may have been entered into with its members in any fundamental 'articles of association'—to use a business phrase—and further, in the case of a State Church, by any compact which may have been entered into with the State. The latter point, of a compact with the State, raises legal questions which cannot be discussed here; nor need we inquire whether the advantages of State connection adequately compensate for this want of control by a Church over its own formulary of the faith. In illustration of the manner in which such questions present themselves, it may be mentioned that the power of the Church of Scotland over its Standards, and the relation of its ministers to these Standards, have within recent years occupied the attention not only of the General Assembly of the Church but of Parliament. The Assembly appointed a committee, in the Report of which [1901] the powers of the Church with regard to the Confession of Faith are stated as follows: (1) That Church Courts have in their judicial capacity the fullest power in dealing with cases of alleged error in doctrines; (2) That the Church may also by a Declaratory Act explain or define doctrinal points as to which the Confession is ambiguous or silent; (3) But so long as the Act of 1690 remains in force, the Church has no power, by a Declaratory Act or otherwise, to modify,

Case of the  
Church of  
Scotland and  
its Confession.

abridge, or extend any article of the Confession. There were important dissents from the conclusion thus defined, and the General Assembly [1901] received the Report with the following addendum: 'In resolving, in the meantime, to proceed no further in the matter, the General Assembly refer to their Act on Subscription of Office-Bearers in the Church (xvii., 1889) in which they declared their desire, by the changes then enacted, "to enlarge rather than curtail any liberty heretofore enjoyed, and to relieve subscribers from unnecessary burdens as to forms of expression and matters which do not enter into the substance of the faith." The General Assembly renew this declaration, and recognising that the complete and exclusive jurisdiction in all causes concerning the faith which is inherent in the Church of Christ has been ratified and guaranteed to the Church of Scotland by National Statutes, and that the Church's ultimate authority in all such matters are Holy Scriptures and the Holy Spirit, the General Assembly are confident that the Office-Bearers in the Church will so exercise its jurisdiction as not to oppress the consciences of any who, while owning the sum and substance of the doctrine of the Reformed Churches, are not certain as to some less important determinations also contained in it.' Thus the conclusion practically was that any important modification of the Confession of Faith, or of the Church's relation to it, could only take place by securing the acquiescence of the civil power.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix H.

## V. CREED SUBSCRIPTION

Leaving, however, such special questions on one side, we may remark that, in the Protestant Churches at least, the uniformity desired in matters of doctrine has generally been secured, or the attempt has been made to secure it, by means of subscription. Every office-bearer has been required to sign the Church's Creed or Confession in token of his acceptance of it. It is evident that this involves more than a matter of religion. It is a measure that pertains to the internal economy of a Church, since its design is to make possible the organisation of the Church and to secure it when made. The Creed subscribed is entitled therefore to an allegiance of a special kind. 'Its acceptance assumes the character of a covenant; the Confession is made by the individual to and before the Church; and loyalty to that Church involves true and honest loyalty to the symbol on which the Church is based.'

What sub-  
scription  
implies.

Two practical errors have been noted in connection with this subject. 'The first calls for an acceptance of every section and clause of the endorsed Creed—an avowal of personal allegiance to every word or phrase, and of obligation to maintain and defend the symbol in each particular. . . . This is a blind allegiance . . . the attempt to enforce which within the Presbyterian Church has always failed, and must always fail, for the simple reason that it is at variance with the fundamental position of our symbols respecting the supremacy of Scripture,

Neither blind  
allegiance to  
the Creed,

the fallibility of human Councils, and the superior obligation of fidelity to personal conscience in all matters of belief. The opposite error is a latitudinarian indifference to the specific teaching of the Creed avowed, or to the covenant implied in a true subscription. . . . If the authority of such symbols be earthly and human, it is still real, and ought to be binding on all, and especially on all in official station, who have once voluntarily accepted any symbol as their own, and have entered into formal covenant to support and proclaim it.' nor indifference to its specific teaching.

Though the covenant once entered into should be loyally observed, the question still remains as to what its terms should be and what should be the nature of the Confessional document to which it binds. Various expedients have been resorted to in order to obtain the advantages of subscription without the pressure upon conscience which it often involves, and the insincerity if not dishonesty to which it sometimes leads. Some would relax the formula of subscription ; but it is evident that if it may be left to a man's conscience how far his teaching shall reflect the Church's Creed, the use of subscription, and even the advantage of having a Creed at all, is practically renounced. Others would leave the Confession as it is and make the formula binding, only with an understanding that the obligation really undertaken is to the Confession as a historical document interpreted by the mind of the Church of the present day. This is perhaps the position most frequently assumed, and is one for Should the terms of subscription be lax or strict?

which a great deal could be said ; it avoids the looseness of a relaxed formula, without imposing the Confession in a sense in which it probably could not be accepted. It labours, however, under the disadvantage that however intelligible to one who knows the history of the Confession, and who recognises the necessity of a practical compromise, it is liable to be misconstrued by the man in the street, who looks to the terms of a bargain and insists on their literal fulfilment. It would be better if the formula of subscription were so drawn as to express distinctly what is really implied.

The degree of assent should be clearly expressed.

The use of two formularies recommended:

(1) To set forth the 'necessaria.'

(2) To include the 'dubia,' not essential for membership or office.

To the writer it has often appeared that the best solution of the difficulty would be to have *two* formularies, which might be distinguished as a Creed and a Manifesto, the former confined to the few fundamental principles of the faith to which every minister and teacher of the Church should be strictly bound to adhere, the latter consisting of a full statement for their guidance and for the information of all whom it might concern, as to the lines on which the Church of any given period would expand those fundamental principles. The writer is interested to see the same view adopted and advocated by his late friend and colleague, Professor Milligan of the University of Aberdeen, in his lectures on the *Ascension and Heavenly Priesthood of Our Lord*. 'The conclusion,' he says, 'to which we are led seems to be, that a distinction ought to be drawn between Creed, as a test of office-bearing or membership, and those larger, wider and more

elaborate theological statements, which the Church may yet by a majority, and therefore speaking as a whole, put forth as the expression of her faith on particulars not needed for Christian unity. Let her utter her testimony on these points with all plainness and force ; let her proclaim her sense of their importance ; let her defend them in the face of opponents, and let her spare no efforts to make opponents friends ; but let her not say, as say she must when she makes them a test : No one who does not receive them can be a member, either with office or without office, in our company.' The double formulary thus suggested would be to some extent a revival of the practice of some ancient Churches, where the Baptismal Creed was that exacted from the members, and the Rule of Faith was the expansion of it, the form of guidance provided for teachers and inquirers. In the West the Rule of Faith appears to have been based upon the Creed, with the Scriptures as its interpreter and supplement, while in the East it was based upon the Scriptures in so far as these were expressed in the Creed. In both cases the Rule of Faith was the floating element in which Creed and Scripture were fixed points. Dr. Milligan also points out that when theology in a wide extent of its conclusions has been made a bond of communion, the result has been the decadence of theological study, which, where Creeds are less elaborate or less stringent, has been sedulously pursued and constantly held in honour. It is certainly wise, whatever course is

With elaborated tests, theological study decays.

adopted in regard to Creed subscription, that the Church, while safeguarding itself as a religious social institution, should leave as much liberty as possible to its scholars and preachers. It can only benefit by an endeavour to secure unity of fundamental conception along with the richness that comes of the varied experiences and the disciplined thinking of devout and earnest men.

#### VI. THE CREED IN WORSHIP

The use of the Creed in worship, that is, as part of the Church's liturgy, is closely allied to the question of Creed subscription. Instead of the one declaration of acceptance of its articles, there is a periodical affirmation, though in oral instead of written form. This has been objected to, even as regards the Apostles' Creed, both in the Church of England and in the Churches of the Continent. There is an advantage, as was pointed out in a previous chapter, in our being thus brought into contact with the utterances of the faith of the past, enabling us to recognise how much we have in common, and reminding us of the Rock whence we were hewn. But the Creed of one age can never be an adequate and accurate expression of the faith of another. Creeds should be recited as historical documents only, for instruction and as models of their kind, but not necessarily as expressive in every detail of the living faith of to-day—as we may recite, for example, the minatory Psalms and those in which

Recital of  
Creeds—what  
measure of  
assent is  
implied.



the sacred poet denounces his enemies and the enemies of his religion — sympathising with the righteous indignation which inspires him, while we feel that we have outgrown the forms it not infrequently assumes.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE UNITY OF TRUTH AND THE UNITY OF CHRISTIAN MEN

ANY study of the history of Christian doctrine—and the field we have been exploring in these chapters forms but a small corner of that great domain—is apt at first to leave upon the mind a sense of bewilderment, almost of despair, as we become acquainted with the infinite variety of Christian doctrine and trace its wide ramifications. But if ‘a little philosophy inclineth a man’s mind to atheism, depth in philosophy bringeth man’s mind about to religion,’ and a more careful examination makes us aware of the unity that underlies all this variety, that the thoughts of men are widened, rather than revolutionised, with the process of the suns. It makes us more and more convinced that there *is* truth to be attained, and that all efforts and searchings, even all mistakes and aberrations of men, bring us nearer to it. The full-orbed truth no man, perhaps no Church, can ever grasp. But our partial apprehensions pieced together, aiding and supplementing one another, bring us nearer to the truth; the trend of the movement becomes gradually perceptible, and through the combination and comparison of Creeds, as has been already

Study of  
Creeds reveals  
unity under-  
lying variety,

remarked, we make a nearer approach to the goal than any single Creed makes possible. 'The Creeds,' says Dr. Schaff, 'are milestones and finger-boards in the history of Christian doctrine. They embody the faith of generations and the most valuable results of religious controversies. They still shape and regulate the theological thinking and public teaching of the Churches of Christendom. They keep alive sectarian strifes and antagonisms, but they reveal also the underlying agreement and foreshadow the possibility of future harmony.'<sup>1</sup> And Dr. Schaff's monumental work, to which the writer desires to acknowledge his great obligations, was undertaken with an irenic purpose, 'to promote a better understanding among the Churches of Christ.'

and aids our approach towards ultimate truth.

We trust that nothing we have said will convey the impression that we treat differences lightly and undervalue sincerity of conviction. On the contrary, we think our studies have shown us that however necessary it is to expose error, to reject the false, to set free the truth from that which would compromise it, it is in affirmation not negation, in faith not unbelief, that life and strength and power lie. It may be that the Christian Church has resembled the Israelites of old. They came out of Egypt accompanied by a 'mixed multitude' who did not really belong to them, who shared their deliverance, but whose presence possibly explains to a considerable extent their failures and their sins. Christian doctrines and Creeds have con-

Conviction is needed—affirmation not negation is spiritual power.

<sup>1</sup> Schaff, *History of the Creeds*, p. 4.

tained admixture of human fallibility and error, but the Church has conquered by the truth she represented, not by the mistakes with which it has been temporarily associated, by the energy of living conviction she possessed, by the force tending to make life pure and holy which she manifested. This is that which was imaged for all time in the bush that burned and was not consumed.

To understand each other we must know our own and others' doctrinal history.

But it is desirable that we who differ from one another should at least make an effort to understand each other; that we should place ourselves at the standpoint of others and try to look at truth through their eyes. And we submit that such understanding can never be brought about unless we know something of the history of that process by which we have come to be what we are. It is as a contribution to such knowledge that these chapters have been designed. And understanding promotes sympathy. It may not lead to the abolition, the obliteration of differences of view, nevertheless it cannot but enable us to attain a more just estimate of the relative importance of our differences, to distinguish between the *necessaria* and the *dubia* in the famous aphorism, '*In necessariis, unitas; in dubiis, libertas; in omnibus, caritas.*'

Creeds, as we have seen, depend upon Scripture as the cluster of grapes hangs from the branch; but the true vine is Christ, to whom the Scriptures testify. The more we have the mind of Christ, the more we shall understand the Bible and put living meaning into the Creeds.

These chapters upon Creeds and Confessions have touched but the hem and border of a great subject. But if we have indeed known the love of God our Father, if we have experienced the grace of Christ our Saviour, if the Holy Spirit have shed abroad in our hearts His blessed influences, what is the message which our Church, or we as members and ministers of that Church, have for the world around us? At home or abroad, are we dumb because we are lacking in that intense conviction, that personal appropriation of truth, which is the indispensable condition of effective word or work? Only let each man be faithful to that which is given *him*, let him declare the truth which has been revealed to *him*, then will the horizon of truth be enlarged for him and he will view it with ever clearer vision—then will the breath of the Eternal sweep across the silent chords and awaken their music, and the Spirit of Faith which unites ages and generations will be manifested in our midst—if only in the face of ignorance and superstition we testify to that which we have seen with our eyes and our hands have handled of the Word of Life—if only we are faithful and are not afraid.

Individual conviction is the condition of increase of knowledge and effectiveness.

## CHAPTER XVI

### HERESY

#### I. MEANING AND HISTORY OF THE TERM

HERESY is one of those words which have a history, their meaning having been determined by the associations which in course of time have gathered round them.

Etymological  
meaning.

Etymologically regarded, the word is innocent enough; it is simply the Greek word meaning 'choice,' and might be applied to the profession in which a man engaged, as when '*Haeresis navalis*' denoted nothing more serious than 'the shipping business.' Very early, however, it came to be used of the philosophical party, sect, or school to which a man attached himself, or the set of principles by which such a sect or school was distinguished. Religion being in ancient times a national affair, into which one was born and with regard to which therefore he exercised no power of *choice*, it was in *philosophy* that freedom of thought arose and resulted in differences of standpoint and teaching, which compelled those who studied the subject at all to make a selection among them. The name heresy was given on account of the voluntary character of the associations thence resulting. Trans-

Philosophical  
meaning—  
one's school  
of thought.

ferred to the soil of Alexandria, it was applied to the religious parties among the Jews. Josephus speaks of three Jewish *αἵρέσεις*, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes, two of which appear under the same designation in the New Testament. St. Paul before Agrippa says: 'My manner of life, then, from my youth up . . . know all the Jews; having knowledge of me from the first, if they be willing to testify, how that after the straitest sect (*τὴν ἀκριβεστάτην αἵρεσιν*) of our religion I lived a Pharisee.' In such instances there is the statement of a fact, not the indication of a judgment. But a man cannot belong to one party, or adopt one mode of thought, without, implicitly at least, passing judgment upon those who differ from him. There cannot be a *choice* without a *rejection*, and those who choose what we reject must appear to us chargeable at the very least with defective judgment if not with moral obliquity. That is the simple fact or principle upon which the whole history of opinion turns. It is the practical interpretation put upon that simple fact which has determined the most remarkable developments of that history.

Early religious meaning—parties among the Jews.

How a stigma naturally attached itself to the term.

What modern enlightenment has gained is the acknowledgment of the *right* of each man to form his own opinions or views, of the *impropriety* of attempting to influence these by any other means than by an appeal to the mind or moral nature of the man himself. We more fully recognise the limitations under which all intelligence acts, the power of circumstances to mould our judgments. There

is perhaps an undercurrent of doubt beneath our own most positive statements which leads to modesty in assertion. But it is no less true that we cannot arrive at a conclusion on premises which are clear to *us*, without a difficulty in understanding that every one does not arrive at the same conclusion also; we cannot hold a conviction without also holding that they are wrong who do not share it. It is here that we find the starting-point of the idea of heresy in its peculiar historical and legal sense. And it is well to perceive at the outset, that whatever exaggerations and unfortunate developments subsequently attended it, these sprang out of a deep-seated tendency of human nature, and may even be said to derive their first impulse from a necessity of thought. This necessity of thought is that there can be no choice without a corresponding rejection and an *implied* condemnation, easily expanding into a conscious and *explicit* condemnation, of all those who do not choose as we do. We can trace the growth of this feeling step by step. If it is not implied in the words of the Roman Jews to St. Paul, 'as concerning this *sect*, it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against,'<sup>1</sup> it distinctly animates the harangue of Tertullus, accusing St. Paul before Felix: 'We have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of insurrections among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the *sect* of the Nazarenes.'<sup>2</sup> The term thus passes into the language of the

Use of the term in the New Testament.

<sup>1</sup> R.V., Acts xxviii. 22.

<sup>2</sup> R.V., Acts xxiv. 5.



Apostles. 'I hear,' writes St. Paul to the Corinthians,<sup>1</sup> 'that divisions exist among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you'—where 'heresies' or 'factions' is obviously an aggravated form of the 'divisions' or *σχίσματα* mentioned just before, the latter term denoting rather 'want of unity' than, as it did later, 'outward separations,' for in later usage a 'schism' is an aggravated form of heresy. In the Epistle to the Galatians, 'divisions'<sup>2</sup> and 'heresy' again appear together; and 'there shall be schisms and heresies' are words which Justin Martyr ascribes to Christ Himself. In the Epistle to Titus we read: 'A man that is heretical, after a first and second admonition refuse, knowing that such a one is perverted, and sinneth, being self-condemned'; and in 2 Peter we read: 'Among you also there shall be false teachers who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bring-upon themselves swift destruction.'<sup>3</sup> In this last passage, heresy is more distinctly used than anywhere else in the New Testament for 'a form of teaching' regarded as objectionable and dangerous. Though examples of the first or neutral signification of heresy have been cited from Tertullian (whose Latin *secta* is the equivalent of the Greek *αἵρεσις*) and still later from a letter of the Emperor Constantine recorded by Eusebius, the associations

<sup>1</sup> R.V., 1 Cor. xi. 18-19.

<sup>2</sup> *διχοστασίαι*, R.V., Gal. v. 20.

<sup>3</sup> R.V., 2 Peter ii. 1.

The growth of the Church made individuality in doctrine appear culpable.

which gathered round the word became darker and darker. As the Christian faith took shape in what was regarded as a body of settled truth, all those who departed from it found themselves confronted by the conviction and visited with the condemnation of the general mass of believers. As this body of doctrine acquired and accumulated prescriptive authority, there was required more courage—or as it seemed to others, more recklessness and self-will—to oppose it. As the Church became a widely extended and elaborately organised institution, divergences from accepted tenets bore within them the seeds also of separation, even where they did not actually issue in separation, that is, in schism in the specially ecclesiastical sense, breaking up that unity on which the greatest stress was beginning to be laid, on which, as it seemed to many, the very life of the Church depended. It was thus no longer the judgment of one individual against that of another; the contending forces ceased to occupy the same plane, they appeared to represent tradition and the common-sense of mankind as against caprice—an established and beneficent institution as against disturbing elements, which might at first be few and weak, but which would become dangerous if left alone.

Thus heresy or individual self-assertion grew into a more and more heinous offence as consciousness of Church-membership and of corporate responsibility for the Church's teachings developed. But a further element has to be considered before the

full conception of heresy and what it at one time involved can be attained. We have the intervention of the civil power, the attempt to root out heresy by means of pains and penalties. This intervention took place on two grounds. On the one hand, the State might intervene at the instigation of the Church, which, feeling its power or its existence menaced, deemed it right to call in the secular arm to enforce its sentences and destroy its enemies. On the other hand, opposition to the established order in the Church might be indistinguishable from opposition to the established order of the State. Heresy would then be disloyalty, and not seldom led to the rebellion which it in germ implied. The orthodox Creed having been approved by those in authority, dissent from it was so far rejection of that authority, and as in the earlier ages the limits of authority were not too clearly defined or observed, defiance of it in one point was apt to be understood as a general defiance of authority, to which indeed it frequently led. It has been noted that most of the mediaeval heretics *were* revolutionists; their religious tenets formed a part of their general social theory. As early as Constantine, civil punishment attended heresy. It is indeed impossible in many cases now to tell what the early heretics really maintained, since their condemnation was usually followed by the proscription and destruction of their writings. They incurred civil disabilities in various degrees and kinds, and occasionally were even put to death. As time went on,

Alliance of Church and State against heresy.

Heresy seemed rebellion against authority.

Most of the mediaeval heretics were also revolutionaries.

Civil punish-  
ment of heresy  
in England.

the measures directed against heretics increased in severity and in frequency of application. The mode of death deemed most appropriate for offenders of this class was to be burned at the stake. In England it was in the reign of Henry IV., in the dawn of the fifteenth century, that the ecclesiastical power attained its highest point, no doubt greatly owing to the king's doubtful title to the throne. In the second year of that reign [1401], the statute 'De heretico comburendo' was passed. In the same year it received its first victim, and though restricted in its range by the definitions of Elizabeth as to what constituted heresy in the eyes of the law, it was not until the year 1677 that this statute was abolished. 'The first who went from Scotland to join the noble army of martyrs,' says Cunningham, was John Resby, an English priest, and reputed to be a follower of Wycliffe. He perished in 1407. In 1416 the 'Congregatio' of the University of St. Andrews enacted that all 'commencing' Masters of Arts should swear, among other things, to defend the Church against the reviling of the Lollards and that they would resist the Lollards as far as they were able. In 1422 a Scottish Wycliffite was burned at Glasgow. In 1425 the Scottish Parliament enacted that 'every Bishop within his diocese should make inquisition for all Lollards and heretics, and that wherever it was necessary the secular arm should be called in to support the laws and authority of the Church.' The first to suffer after the passing of this Act was

Martyr-  
heretics in  
Scotland.

Paul Craw, a Bohemian, who was burned at St. Andrews in 1433. It is not our object to dwell upon the horrors of such deeds, to describe the martyr-fires of St. Andrews or those of Smithfield—still less to cast an eye abroad upon the dread story of the Inquisition. We desire rather to examine the state of mind which made such acts possible, which made them even natural and proper in the eyes of the perpetrators. That the punishment of heretics by a cruel death was deemed right upon moral and religious grounds, we cannot doubt, even though we make every allowance for the mixed motives which governed many persecutors—the employment, for example, of a charge of heresy as a convenient weapon in the service of private malice or political intrigue. What, then, was the state of mind that gave rise to the condition of things described by Principal Cunningham in discussing the relation of Bishop Wardlaw of St. Andrews to the death of Resby? <sup>1</sup> ‘We would willingly exculpate him if we could from all participation in the horrid crime. He was a prelate of liberal sentiments, of unbounded hospitality, distinguished for his anxiety to reform the clergy and the laity, and to him belongs the undying honour of having given to Scotland its first University. But it is impossible to believe that the fires of religious persecution could be kindled without the approbation of so influential a Bishop. After all, need we wonder that he gave his voice to burn a wandering Wyckliffite, when perhaps there

Analysis of the mind of the conscientious persecutor of heretics.

<sup>1</sup> *Church History of Scotland*, i. 133.

were not ten men then living who did not think it was highly meritorious to persecute heretics to the death? The same sin lies at the door of still greater and holier men.'

Three points it is right to notice in explanation of such an attitude.

(1) Apparent  
scriptural  
justification.

There was, first, the apparent scriptural authority. There was no doubt that the Apostles took very seriously any departure from sound doctrine, anything that endangered the truth of the Gospel, as they had received it. They did not hesitate to express themselves in forcible terms in regard to those who whether hypocritically or mistakenly forsook the faith, or induced others to forsake it. Hear St. Paul denouncing to the Galatians those who preached 'another Gospel,'<sup>1</sup> the advocates of circumcision and of the imposition upon the Gentiles of the Jewish law. Hear him speaking to the elders of Ephesus of the 'grievous wolves' which should after his departure 'enter in.'<sup>2</sup> Hear his denunciations of the incipient Gnosticism which had appeared among the Colossians when his Epistle was written.<sup>3</sup> How distinctly St. John brands as antichrist them 'that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh!'<sup>4</sup> In what dark colours the Epistle of St. Jude<sup>5</sup> and the Second Epistle of St. Peter paint the opponents and detractors of Christianity! And the Epistles to the Seven Churches in the Apocalypse ring out clearly and solemnly

<sup>1</sup> Gal. i. 6-7.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xx. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Col. ii. 8-10.

<sup>4</sup> R.V., 2 John 7; cf. 1 John iv. 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> Jude 4, etc.

the same note of warning and of condemnation. It is true that in all this there is no suggestion of a resort to anything but those moral means which every one is justified in employing in the defence of what he considers right, and for the exposure and defeat of error. But need we wonder, as Dr. Cunningham said of Wardlaw, that in an age when thought leapt to speech, and the strong word was apt to be followed by the rough deed—when, in fact, all those distinctions which we make now and see so clearly were almost non-existent—it should seem that those who denounced and persecuted heretics were pursuing the course to which apostolic authority pointed? Could they not refer also to the tradition regarding St. John and Cerinthus, that the apostle, going into a public bath and hearing that the heretic was there before him, exclaimed, ‘Let us flee from this place lest the bath fall while the enemy of the truth is within it’; or to the example of Polycarp, who, when Marcion asked him if he knew him, replied, ‘I know thee, the first-born of Satan’? This expression Polycarp certainly uses in his Epistle to the Philippians in a general reference: ‘Whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says that there shall be no resurrection nor judgment, he is the first-born of Satan.’ ‘Poisonous plants,’ ‘beasts in human form,’ ‘inspired by the devil,’ are among the epithets which Ignatius, Justin, and Tertullian hurl at the opponents of what they hold as truth. Theophilus of Antioch compares heresies to barren islands,

on which ships are wrecked, and those driven among them perish ; while Origen varies the figure when he represents the heretics as wreckers alluring by false lights those seeking a haven of safety, so that they shall be cast upon the shore and destroyed. It is true that those later persecutors of heretics who believed themselves to be justified by the language of the New Testament and of the early Christian centuries, likewise for the most part firmly believed that immoral practice accompanied, and could not but accompany, error in matters of faith. For which, again, they could quote an apostolic dictum—for did not St. Paul write to Titus: ‘ A man that is heretical, after a first and second admonition refuse ; knowing that such a one is perverted, and sinneth, being self-condemned.’

(2) The terrible earnestness of the persecutors.

Then, further, we must take into account the terrible earnestness of those who assumed this attitude towards heresy. Making all allowance for the admixture in many cases of unworthy motives, there can be no doubt that the real force of the whole movement against heresy came from the intense religious conviction that lay behind it. The Church, those who belonged to her, and especially the men who if they did not direct her action were the real strength of those who did, believed that they were in possession of the truth which alone could save, that any deviation from that truth imperilled the souls of men, that the welfare of the world was indissolubly bound up with the maintenance of the institution which every heresy



threatened to undermine. It was no trifle that was at stake, but the highest and best that men knew ; it was no outwork which was attacked, but the very citadel of truth and right.<sup>1</sup> Especially was this conviction intensified and the duty of exterminating all heresy pressed upon the consciences of men, when in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the darker side of the Catholic theology came into greater prominence. The hymns of that time give expression to the vivid conception of the horrors of hell which then held in awe and terror the popular imagination. And it has been remarked that if the doctrine of Purgatory served, on the one hand, to mitigate this conception of the terrors of hell by casting a ray of hope upon the dread prospect, the moral influence of the terrors, the apprehension they inspired, was even intensified by this same doctrine of Purgatory, since it brought ' the penalties of the future world more within the compass of men's imagination and made them more real to their fear.' Purgatory could accordingly be ' appealed to and turned to daily use, when threats of hell might invite only defiance, despair, or a deadlier unbelief. In its practical effect, therefore, it rather darkened than softened the tone of religious appeal.' In such appeal ' the terrors of the Church begin to

Influence of the conception of the terrors of hell and of the doctrine of Purgatory.

<sup>1</sup> Walter Bower, 'the venerable father in Christ,' abbot of the monastery of St. Columba upon Inchcolm in the Firth of Forth, in his continuation of John of Fordun's *Scotichronicon*, written 1440-47, chap. xvi., devotes two sections to the outpouring of the vials of his righteous indignation against the Lollard heretics. Every denunciatory epithet at his command is heaped upon them.—J. M.

predominate ; fear, instead of reverence or conviction, becomes the real foundation of its authority ; from spiritual it has recourse to carnal weapons.' The Church is the only ark of safety from these pains and penalties which become more real to men as they lose their vague mysteriousness and approximate to the dungeon and the torture, already familiar. Pity for the soul suggests the duty of pitilessness to the body. 'The word, "Compel them to come in," rings across the ages from the days of old, and the thumbscrew, the rack and the stake seem the only effectual means for carrying out the command. Should men hesitate in obedience to a mere humane impulse ? Is mercy here not the extreme of cruelty ? If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out ; if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off. The fire is purifying not only to the Church but to its victim, and so the burning of a heretic becomes absolutely an *Auto da fe*, an " Act of Faith. "'

(3) General reluctance to resort to extreme measures.

But once more, we must note what is too often overlooked, the reluctance with which the Church, as a whole, applied the persecuting principles which it yet felt itself constrained to adopt. What we have just described was the logic of the position, but the world is not always ruled by logic, and the safeguards which surrounded the process against heresy are at once curious and instructive. St. Paul had spoken of 'a first and second admonition,' and the Church has uniformly made *persistence* of the essence of heresy. The accepted definition of heresy under the Canon Law was that it consisted

Persistence in error essential to 'heresy' according to Canon Law.

of 'a voluntary error of the intellect in respect of some Catholic proposition or doctrine, asserted with *pertinacity* by one who had received baptism. All error is not heresy. The mistake must be that of one who has had opportunities of knowing the truth ; the doctrine in respect of which it is alleged must have been clearly stated ; the error must have been consciously and willingly entertained ; and ample warning must precede condemnation.' The Fathers again distinguished between heresies of a revolutionary character, those which were radically irreconcilable with Christianity, such as Ebionitism, Gnosticism, and Manichaeism, and divergences in minor points, such as those represented by the Montanists, the Novatians, or the Donatists. The validity of baptism by the latter three was fully recognised, which was significant when we remember how intimately baptism was related to the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. To come down to later times—according to the theory, the Roman Catholic being the only Church, and there being no salvation outside of the Church—the condition of Protestants and others is hopeless indeed. But thereupon a distinction is introduced which has the effect of softening the apparent harshness of this judgment. Those who are adherents of any sect in all good faith and without active rejection of the truth on their own part, and who have been born and educated in erroneous principles, are chargeable only with 'material' heresy, while those are guilty of 'formal' heresy who, purposely

Deserters from the faith distinguished from born adherents of sects.

and of their own will, abandon and reject the teaching of the Church. For the latter no severity can be too great, while the former are remitted to the judgment of God, whose it is to try the thoughts of the heart. The distinction, it must be admitted, says more for the good feeling than the consistency of those who maintain it. If the state of the heart can count for anything in the case of one who does not outwardly belong to the Catholic Church, what becomes of the doctrine upon which the whole system of Rome is built—‘*Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*’? It embodies also, or at least implies, that further distinction between the Invisible and the Visible Church against which Rome has always so vigorously protested.

In the course of the history of which it has been possible to give only the most rapid of surveys, we cannot always say that the question has been one simply of parties and majorities, the dense and tyrannical many arrayed against the enlightened but powerless few. There can of course be little doubt that among the so-called heretics there was many a faithful witness to apostolic simplicity and truth. Yet the right cannot be said to have been invariably on the heretics’ side. Through the action taken by the Church in repressing heresies, the existence not only of the Church as an institution but of Christianity as a religion was frequently preserved. Thus of the great crisis of the early centuries, Harnack remarks that the theology of Athanasius, ‘following on the theology of the

Right was  
sometimes with  
the heretics,  
sometimes  
with the  
Church.

Apologists and Origen, was the efficient means of preventing the complete Hellenising and secularisation of Christianity.' Yet again, on the other hand, as another writer has remarked, 'there are hours in which the heretic who suffers, who seeks and who prays, is nearer the source of life than the intellectual obstinacy of an orthodoxy incapable, as it would seem, of comprehending the dogmas which it preserves embalmed' (in its formularies).

## II. ORTHODOXY AND HETERODOXY AT THE PRESENT DAY

The question now arises—With respect to heresy, how far do the circumstances of the present day differ from those of the past? How far is a Protestant Church entitled to recognise and deal with heresy? What should be our attitude towards it, our method of dealing with it?

Historically, it may be affirmed that the leaders of the Reformation never dreamt of setting up a number of rival Churches in opposition to the one old Church or to each other. Their intention was Reform, not separation, and when they were driven outside the pale of the Roman Church they contended among themselves, Lutheran against Zwinglian or Calvinist, as to which represented the true Church. They entered upon a period of Polemic, in which the object of each section was to establish its own confessional views and to disprove others. When at last they recognised each other not as

Separation from Rome and the setting up of mutually rival Churches were not intended by the Reformers.

The reformed Churches finally recognised each other, each claiming to be the most scriptural.

antichristian, but as representing different forms of Christianity, Irenic succeeded Polemic, attention was called to the common rather than the divergent elements of belief, and gradually the existence and the right of different Churches came to be looked upon as a fact, which had to be reckoned with. The claim of infallibility was gradually laid aside, the Scriptures being recognised as the norm and standard of doctrine; each Church believed that its own Confession represented the closest approximation to scriptural truth; and the logic of circumstances compelled them to admit that they differed only in degree of such approximation, so that none could claim to be in possession of absolute truth. Now, while in an infallible Church, intolerance may become a sacred duty, does it follow that with the renunciation of infallibility, all views and opinions become equally probable, and that no community organised for religious purposes is henceforth to impose any positive doctrine as a condition of its membership, and still more as a condition of exercising within it the teaching function or of directing its practical activities? It may be that the assertion of the right of private judgment has been largely reinforced by the indifference of many to all religious truths and interests, so that tolerance in the minds of many has become synonymous with indifference; but the full acceptance of that 'tolerance' would be fatal to any Church, would introduce chaos into its councils and paralyse its active efforts.

While not asserting infallibility, each rightly set up a doctrinal test for itself.

Let us glance at the fundamental condition of this

problem. Religion is first of all a fact of experience. In experience it has its root, thence it derives its reality. But the fact of experience gives rise to reflection—we must investigate causes, relations, consequences, and so doctrine emerges. Religion has no longer only an emotional, an experiential, it has also an intellectual side. Though the latter has no meaning or reality apart from the former, the transition from the experience to the attempt at an intellectual comprehension of it is inevitable—only on this condition can the experience be grasped, fixed, utilised.

Philosophical justification of such tests.

(1) Religion is a fact of experience.

Religious experience demands intellectual expression.

Then religion is social. Its primary experiences are not confined to the individual, since even in the individual they are not isolated, but are linked together, and form a progressive development. Similarly, those of different individuals are related, and on the basis thus afforded there grow up a common doctrine, common worship, and all the elaborations of an institution, a Church, with its pervading atmosphere and its continuity of life. 'A religious life,' it has been said, 'which remains hidden in the consciousness of the individual, which does not communicate itself and creates no spiritual bond, no soul-fraternity, is as if it were not; it is a mere sentimental fancy, a passing poetic gleam, which is of no more consequence for the individual himself than for the human race.'

(2) Religion is social as well as individual.

A common religion with common doctrine and a common organisation at once and necessarily gives rise to the opposition of orthodoxy and heresy.

(3) Community of doctrine implies orthodoxy and heresy.

The heritage, the tradition of the community, must be more or less definitely distinguished not only from that which is in obvious antagonism to it, but from the opinions and interpretations of individual thinkers or of sectional schools of thought within the community itself. The adjustment of the one to the other is the task of ecclesiastical policy, requiring no doubt the judgment and the tact of the wisest and best men that a Church, a people, or an age can produce. To recognise the necessity for such a distinction is not for a moment to deny or ignore that other necessity, of progress in Church doctrine, or to withdraw the common tradition from inquiry and criticism. The questions which have been decided within a Church or religious community may be reopened on good cause shown. But the Church may fairly claim that in proportion as the decisions have been come to after full consideration, they cannot be lightly overthrown, and that her peace should not be disturbed by wanton and inconsiderate attacks. On the other hand, when the decisions which have been adopted give rise to new questions, or are found to have been vaguely expressed, or to leave gaps which speculation and investigation alone can fill up, there is room for suggestion and discussion. Some of the suggestions and of the points discussed may be assimilated by the Church and adopted into her Creed, while some must be rejected, and are henceforth regarded as heresy. *Where* the line should be drawn is a *practical* question which must

Community of doctrine does not imply an unchangeable Creed.

The difficult dividing line between established and disputable doctrines.



be decided as each case arises and according to the best light which is available. In Nature things shade off into one another in a way which often seems to render exact science impossible and classifications nugatory. What could appear more distinct than the animal and vegetable kingdoms, for example? Yet forms come to light with regard to which it is difficult to say on which side of the line they are to be placed. But classification is a necessity of systematic study—and proceeds upon a consideration of the more obvious differences between phenomena. One science runs into another, the lines drawn by the science of to-day may be swept away by the deeper knowledge of to-morrow. Yet no one argues that there is no real knowledge of Nature, that Science has gained no solid foothold; and though no conclusions of Science are theoretically above being impugned, yet practically very many of them are regarded as established. So with Religion. As soon as it passes from the individual to the social stage, the opposition of orthodox and heretical inevitably arises; but the distinction is a *practical* necessity, and the application of the distinction is a matter of practical wisdom. Without the possession of a common body of doctrine the religious community would be impossible. Of course, with regard to every new doctrinal development, the question of the community's acceptance or rejection of the new doctrine must be faced.

The distinction thus suggested between orthodoxy and heresy is of course always relative. The

Orthodox and heretical are merely relative terms.

They correspond to the common and the peculiar.

Freedom of opinion—its legitimate and illegitimate claims.

Christians were heretics to the Jews ; the Greek Church is schismatic, though not heretic, to the Roman ; Protestants are heretics to the Roman Catholic Church ; though Protestant Churches do not apply the name to each other, never having been mutually inclusive, they express the distinction in some other way, and must be regarded as heretical to each other ; and each Church has heretics within its own borders. It is simply the distinction between the common and the peculiar or individual, where the common is in possession and the individual bears the responsibility of voluntary divergence from it. In the relation of the two tendencies there will of course be instances of undue predominance of one or other. In a Church which claims infallibility, the common traditional doctrine will be enforced, inquiry stifled, rigid uniformity as far as possible secured. On the other hand, everything may be thrown into the melting-pot, and the continuance of any bond of union threatened in the name of freedom of opinion. Freedom of opinion is within its right when it claims that its freedom shall be a real freedom and should not expose its representative to civil disabilities or social ostracism, but can it fairly claim that the bond by which social religion is constituted should be so far relaxed that the religious community should tolerate within it that which its instinct and judgment tell it is inconsistent with the maintenance of its position and paralysing to its practical activities ?

## III. ORTHODOXY, HETERODOXY, AND TRUTH

But, it may be asked, while orthodoxy and heresy are thus related to each other and to the religious community, what is the relation of both to Truth—truth in the sense of conformity with fact or reality? Is not the search for the highest truth, the aim and object of all religious inquiry? Is not truth greater than any creed or any institution? May not then the truth lie with the heretic rather than with the Church? May not the name *a seeker after truth* be more to be desired than that of heretic is to be dreaded? It may. There is much force in the objections. Yet if all that these objections might be held to imply were allowed, should we not then have to affirm that there could be no common possession of religious truth apart from the results of each individual's investigation, that all which the Church has done throughout the ages of her existence must be done over again within the narrow limits of individual experience, that there is no *common* knowledge, nothing within this sphere which can be looked upon as settled so far as human judgment can settle anything? Could any science live under the conditions which it is thus proposed to apply to theological thought? In a phenomenon so stupendous as the religious thinking of mankind, is there no line discernible which may be termed that of legitimate development, or is there no meaning in history, is it the arena of blind forces and fortuitous results? To those of us who

The individual investigator and the body of commonly accepted truth.

believe in the Divine Revelation—not mechanically given indeed, but ‘by divers portions and in divers manners,’ conditioned on the one hand by human capacity of receiving and understanding it, but exhibiting on the other a real divine guidance—it must seem that the whole education of the human race has been in vain, unless in the trend of this revelation we have a criterion for more or less surely distinguishing truth from error, a means of ‘proving the spirits whether they are of God.’ Even those to whom our present religious thinking is only an outcome of natural evolution, a manifestation of the collective human intelligence, with only such objective significance as it derives from the fact of its proceeding out of the essential conditions of human nature, of being founded, as they say, in the nature of things—even they must allow the possibility of distinguishing between the main trunk and the branches of this great organic growth, of being able to say which is the graft and which is the natural branch, which is an outcome of the life of the whole, which is excrescence, and which is dead and useless. No doubt Christian doctrine has grown. The services of heresy in promoting and stimulating this growth have been frequently and amply acknowledged. Heresy has compelled the Church to define its vague and floating thoughts, to bring them into consistency with the great principles on which it is established. The requirement that heresies should themselves be judged by reference to the same great principles, by asking how

Heresy has often stimulated the growth of that organic body of truth.

far they are in the legitimate line of development, is expressed in the ancient maxim, that the best refutation of heresies is to trace them back to their origin.

It is in the application of the principle that the difficulty and responsibility come in. Who is to judge what is in the legitimate line and what is not? It can only be the Church, the religious community, upon the one side, and he who takes the divergent line upon the other. By these the apparently conflicting interests of strict loyalty to truth and justice and of charity must be determined. The Church must be sure of itself and must watch over its trust. Toleration towards all or every shade of opinion means treason to its own conscience, or a demonstration that it has no conscience at all, no consciousness of a hold on truth. 'The Church hesitant,' it has been truly said, 'has never formulated a living Creed.' 'We believe and therefore speak' is the sole justification for word or act. And he who takes up the attitude of independence must make sure that he does so, not from self-will or caprice, not through failure to understand or want of care to ascertain the position from which he dissents, but from solemn conviction of the truth as in the sight of God. Between the two, at the moment of the conflict, God alone may be able absolutely to decide; to human vision, only consequences and aftergrowths may make clear which has been in the right; but when the contest is sharp, and a decision is required, each can only do his best according to the light which he has.

Who is to  
decide what is  
organic body,  
and what  
excrement?

#### IV. THE PRACTICAL NECESSITY TO DECIDE WHAT IS ORTHODOXY AND WHAT HERESY

But why decide at all? Since no Protestant Church can consistently claim to be infallible, since above its Creed every such Church sets the Scriptures as the standard of final appeal, since it admits that in framing and justifying its Creed the Bible must be interpreted, and that human powers of interpretation are fallible, and the result possibly erroneous, why attempt to draw the line between orthodoxy and heresy at all? The reason, as we have already indicated, is a practical one. If Churches existed for nothing else than to hear sermons, and to join in some indefinite emotional way in worship, there might be no need for Creeds, and no sense in the proscription of heresy. But Churches exist—the name ‘The Church’ is to be avoided as too much associated with that idea of infallibility which we have seen does not belong to any Church—Churches exist for practical purposes, as, for example, for building up a certain type of religious life, for the religious instruction and training of the young, who must always be regarded as minors in spiritual as in other things, and for bringing those outside to the knowledge of the truth, as by Foreign Missions. Is a common basis not necessary for these things, and can those work together in regard to them who have not some basis in common? It must of course be determined what degree of divergence is permissible, and *when* the

Churches exist  
for practical  
efforts—a  
common basis  
is necessary.

bond of connection is strained to the breaking point. Unity does not necessarily mean uniformity, yet two can hardly walk or work together without a certain amount of agreement.

That it is the practical element in the problem which is here the determining one, appears from the fact that in almost all Churches the bulk of the members are very much more loosely related to the Creed than those engaged in teaching, whether in pulpits or in theological colleges. So far as the ordinary member is concerned, unless by means of his writings he claims a place among the unofficial teachers of the Church, and by speaking from within the Church claims a quasi-recognition for what he says, he may hold views very much at variance with those of the community to which he belongs without being prosecuted for heresy, and without anything but his own conscience directing him as to how long he may remain within the community. It is not that the sphere of influence of the *ordinary* member is small, and may be neglected. It is not merely that the *official* teacher commits the Church so far to what he says. It is that the latter has so much influence in determining what the Church's practical character is to be and what its practical life and aims are to be. The Church, every Church, is an organism, and must determine what, for it, is food and what is poison, what is the permissible variety of doctrine necessary to a vigorous and healthy life, and what is the disease-germ, the introduction of which can lead only to decay and death. The

Proof—An unofficial member of a Church has much greater doctrinal liberty than the official agents.

Yet an organic body must grow—neither excretion nor assimilation should be checked.

Conflict between the inquirer and the guardian of the doctrinal heritage.

duty of 'holding fast that which is good' is at least as necessary as that of 'proving all things.' No Church can abdicate the right or neglect the duty of guarding the purity of its doctrine without ceasing to be what it is, a manifestation of social religion, a body organised upon a common basis for practical ends. On the other hand, organisation means growth, progress; no Church can live which is not as ready to assimilate all that is true and good, as to eliminate all that is false and destructive.<sup>1</sup> And the Church's teachers are also in general the Church's investigators. It is theirs to search for truth, as well as to impart the truth already gained. It is inevitable that in the exercise of this twofold function difficulties will emerge. Thus criticism comes into conflict with tradition, the inquirer with the guardian of the Church's heritage. A

<sup>1</sup> 'It is only in word or to the intellectually dead that the Creed of the present is the same as the Creed of the past' (T. H. Green).—J. M.

'The Confession must be the Confession of the Church, and not the Church the Church of the Confession. She must make it and not it her. The Church as a living body must always hold the superior place, and must assert her entire and constant right to amend, to add to, or entirely recast her own Confession. A Confession which is not the spontaneous and convinced utterance of the Church's present conviction ceases to be a Confession. . . . But it is notorious that in the past two generations theology has not stood still. Probably it would be agreed that with the exception of the Reformation no age in the Church's history has witnessed changes more significant than have been accomplished during the past fifty years. Things held certain 250 years ago can now only be classed among the probable or possible. . . . Many of the problems which have been most vigorously discussed in recent years have only emerged in the process of modern investigation. Inevitably, therefore, some clauses of the Westminster Confession have become inapplicable; while on the other hand the errors of our time are necessarily overlooked' (Prof. Marcus Dods, *British Weekly*, 3.xi.1904).—J. M.



situation is created which demands the highest wisdom, nay, the guidance of Heavenly Wisdom, to deal with it effectually. A statement and suggested solution of the difficulty have been formulated thus: 'A tradition which regards itself as absolute, which misunderstands and stifles the inspiration of the individual soul, not only usurps a place not its own, but even falls short of its mission, which is to build up Christians of full age, having within themselves their animating impulse and their guiding rule. Such a tradition resembles those tyrannical mothers who would, if they could, keep their sons perpetually in leading strings. On the other hand, it is not becoming when the sons, even when they have attained their majority, despise their mother, break with her, and disdain the counsels to which age and experience give value. The individual judgment which becomes irreconcilable, which cuts itself off from the received tradition and becomes a law to itself, stamps itself at once as sectarian; it ignores the bond of solidarity which unites the generations to one another, and the continuity of society in which alone the life of religion like that of civilisation can make progress. The former error, that of the usurping tyranny of tradition, dominates the Roman Catholic Church; the opposite error, that of obstinate adherence to individual convictions, and of trusting to the inner light, is the scourge of Protestant communities. The truth would be found in a middle way, in a Church organised on the basis of tradition sufficiently

The two extremes.

Roman Catholic—the tyranny of tradition.

Protestant—undue assertion of individual conviction.

strong to gather up without losing aught of the inheritance of the past, sufficiently comprehensive and elastic to admit of the legitimate expansion of Christian minds and the acquisition of new treasures (of truth).'

This is obviously an ideal. The practical and only possible method of dealing with the problem is more rough and ready. But only a Church which has no distinctive character to preserve can safely renounce the right of excluding, theoretically from its membership, actually from its ministry, those whose conceptions of Christianity are fundamentally opposed to its own. It is a right to be exercised with due care and deliberation, with self-searching and with sympathy. Granted that where there is no claim to infallibility, there is always the admission of the possibility of error, yet such admission is no excuse for the non-performance of the duty which lies to hand. To act to the best of our knowledge and judgment in any matter is not to claim infallibility, it is only to do the best practically possible, and to take no action in such a case may be as positive a judgment as to act, and may involve an equal weight of responsibility. But while this is so; while we must hold that a Church has a right to define the limit of doctrinal divergence which it can safely permit, having regard not merely to its interests as an institution, but to the conditions of its life and work; while the Church's duty is to enforce observance of that limit, the writer nevertheless holds strongly that

The condemnation of heresy is a practical necessity.

Condemnation should not suggest an assumption of infallibility.

the *form of severance*, by which alone in the last resort that duty can be carried out, is in some Churches, at least, altogether unsuited to the requirements of the case. The form of deposition in use argues an assumption of infallibility on the part of those who use it. In the case of moral delinquency, absolute certainty may be assumed; in the case of intellectual judgments, there is always room for misunderstanding and mistake. In such cases a moral certainty is generally the best attainable guide of action. Surely we may part with the heretic with mutual respect; we may admire his character, his zeal, his courage, his ability, yet reluctantly conclude that his attitude upon matters of the highest moment makes action in common between him and us impossible. The opprobrium which has gathered round the name of heretic is largely a survival from an older day; it need not continue when the conditions of human knowledge, even the methods of divine revelation, are better understood. As we do not say that other Churches are not Churches of Christ because in many things they differ from ourselves and because we could not without mutual loss amalgamate our organisation with theirs, so the fact that we cannot recognise a man as an office-bearer in our ecclesiastical organisation does not mean, as once it did, that we consider him necessarily alien from the spirit and the communion of the Master. Some form of severance breathing this more modern spirit and understanding should, we think, be devised, by which the Church's

Or that the  
heretic is an  
alien to Christ.

most painful duty might be carried out without offence to either dignity or charity.

General  
sympathy goes  
to the heretic.

To the retention of a form of severance which is unsuited to a conception of the relation of orthodoxy and heresy, based no longer upon a claim to infallibility, is no doubt due the curious circumstance that in our day the general sympathy goes forth rather to the heretic than to the Church which is endeavouring to be faithful to the trust it has received. No doubt it often seems to be the cause of the weak against the strong, of the one against the many, of freedom against tyranny. We have tried to show that the recognition of the distinction between orthodoxy and heresy, and even the action based upon it, represent a practical necessity, if we are to have union for religious purposes, if we are to have organised religious communities at all. And if we have no union, no organisation, how much weaker for good we should become! At the same time, there is some justification for the popular view. History has not seldom shown us that in the conflict the *one* has been right, the *many* have been wrong, or at least that the *one* has represented a side of truth which the *many* have ignored. It is the tendency and the danger of religious formulas to decay from within, to lose the life which at first filled them and gave them force and meaning, to become empty husks. Then they who seek new forms are really seeking utterance for the new life which fills them, and which they who adhere to the ancient ways cannot realise. The former seem

to represent a broader humanity, and a wider apprehension of the truth of God. In all such collisions the community as well as the individual is on its trial. 'Churches,' it has been said with truth, 'are as liable to the defects and bias of the elect as are nations or individual historic characters, and they enjoy no protection from the penalties. We must always contemplate as a possibility that any given ecclesiastical society may become a savourless salt and be treated with contemptuous neglect.' It is the condition of all life. It is here that individual responsibility comes in, and individual faithfulness is evinced. Let us be sure that whether truth be on the side of the community or of the individual, it is great and will prevail. And though we can only act according to our light—though we are not of those

'Who build their faith upon  
The holy text of pike and gun ;  
Decide all controversies by  
Infallible artillery ;  
And prove their doctrine orthodox  
By apostolic blows and knocks ;  
Call fire and sword and desolation  
A Godly thorough Reformation,'

we still have the responsibilities of judgment and of action thereupon.'

## V. THE CHURCH

The term 'Church' itself has clinging to it, as we have seen, a reminiscence of the days when the fact that the one Church of Christ may have many

Churches  
ought to bear  
in mind the  
possibility of  
error.

Recapitulation.

branches and earthly representatives was unrecognised, and each even of the Protestant sections sought to establish itself as the one true Church. Orthodoxy and heresy, as we have also seen, are correlative, and in proportion as the one ceases to claim infallibility, the odium of the other disappears. But this renunciation of infallibility, as has been shown, does not mean that a Church abnegates the right to secure within its pale, and especially among its office-bearers, a certain uniformity of doctrine. In so far as any Church occupies a positive standpoint at all, it is bound to see that reasonable limits in this matter are observed. It is a necessity of the situation. All objections such as those suggested in the lines of Pope—

‘ For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,  
His can’t be wrong whose life is in the right ’—

are beside the mark. In our complicated life, where man acts upon man, and society and the individual mould each other, one man’s life may be in the right in spite of a ‘ mode of faith ’ which in another case would lead to disastrous consequences.

Questions left  
undiscussed.

How far, indeed, a Church’s belief should be defined and set forth in formulas, how far it should distinguish between fundamental and accessory articles, how far it should allow liberty and when it should draw the rein—what is the relation of the whole subject to the question of Church Union—are points which lie beyond our present limits, and are only to be settled by careful and anxious con-

sideration. When the inevitable collision comes between public and private right and interest, it calls for tender and considerate dealing, for great openness and deep conscientiousness, for a sense of responsibility in the sight of God and man. In such a crisis all personal feelings and prejudices must as far as possible be thrust aside. On the one hand, no concern for an institution as such, as though its cause were identical with the cause of God, should justify tyranny ; on the other, we must beware of allowing, even to the sincerest dissentient from the Church's Creed, that infallibility which the Church herself repudiates. In sympathy and brotherliness, but in firmness and honesty, as righteousness and justice seem to point the way to each—by Church and dissident alike, by accuser and accused, duty must be done. Let us honour those who do it, and believe that it is sometimes harder to sit in the judge's seat and join in the sentence which brings pain and penalty upon another, than to suffer in one's own person. A man may in such circumstances be troubled by the fear that his action may be due after all to want of insight or of courage. The accused, on the other hand, may be sustained by the hope, perhaps by the assured conviction, that future generations will recognise in him an apostle of truth, the herald of a new day, a deep-eyed Luther with his ' I can no otherwise,' an Athanasius against the world.

Let us face the issue, and at all such times may God defend the right.





## APPENDIX A—Ch. I. p. 20

### NAMES FOR CREDAL OR SYMBOLICAL STATEMENTS

' IF short, comprehensive, and dignified enough for frequent use in public worship, especially if rhythmically expressed in language of the first person—"I believe," or "We believe"—it becomes a *Creed*. If longer and more minute and systematic, it is technically a *Confession*. Broken up and analytically simplified into a series of didactic questions and answers to assist the memory and intelligence of the young and the unlearned, it is a *Catechism*. Viewed as a proclamation, in an apologetic or other interest, of distinctive doctrine, it is a *Manifesto*, a *Declaration*, a *Profession*, and in America a "Platform." As a passport of admission to membership in a communion it is a *Symbol*. As a bond of union it is a *Consensus*, a *Covenant*, a *Form*, or *Formula*. As a test of doctrine it is a *Standard*, or *Rule of Faith*. As a disavowal and condemnation of errors it is a "Syllabus." In respect of its contents, it may be entitled *Decrees*, *Canons*, *Articles*, *Theses*, *Propositions*, or, as in ancient Scotland sometimes, "Places." When modified and re-issued, it may appear simply as a "Revision." The form of words in which the individual subscribes or professes a Confession is the Formula of Subscription, or simply the "Formula."—Professor William A. Curtis, D.D., D.Litt., *A History of Creeds, etc.*, p. 4.

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## APPENDIX B—Ch. I. p. 7

### A CREEDLESS CHRISTIANITY

' THE profession of faith of Liberal Protestants, or of Liberal Christians—for the two professions merge in one

another—consists wholly of the single precept : Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself. Liberal Protestants feel that they are here at the heart of the true and original Christianity, are in spiritual communion, deep and living, with Christ ; for it was Jesus Himself who summed up the Law and the Prophets, that is to say, the rule of life and the principle of moral inspiration, in this supreme commandment. They equally feel that they are in spiritual communion . . . with all those who have truly loved God as they knew Him, lived the divine life as they understood it, and cherished humanity as it was put before them under the conditions of their age. Their dogmas, their metaphysical doctrines, their rites, their sacraments, their ecclesiastical regulations were of various kinds ; and the dust of history is made up of these widely opposed institutions and theologies. Yet all were agreed in professing the same moral Gospel.’—From *Hibbert Journal*, i. 830, Review of ‘Le Protestantisme Libéral, par Jean Réville’ (Paris, 1903).

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## APPENDIX C—Ch. i. p. 30

### THE ULTIMATE RULE OF FAITH ACCORDING TO PROTESTANTISM

‘PROTESTANTISM was quite clear on the general principle that a Church may not claim inerrancy for creed or confession on the ground of any inherent infallibility, and that the ultimate criterion of the truth of its doctrinal determinations must be their conformity or disconformity with the Word of God’ [p. 60].

‘The Protestant doctrine of Scripture, stated in its most general terms, is “that the canonical Scriptures of the holy Prophets and Apostles of both Testaments are the very and true Word of God.”<sup>1</sup> This doctrine includes two vital

<sup>1</sup> *Conf. Helv. Prior*, i.

positions—that in a unique sense Scripture has proceeded from God as its author, and that the result of the divine agency was to create an instrument which was sufficient and reliable for the function which it was intended to discharge. Obviously, however, there is room for a considerable difference of opinion within the limits that are fixed by these principles. There are degrees in authorship. It usually involves direct responsibility for every idea and word; but authorship may also be affirmed of one who entrusts to another the task of putting his thoughts and plans in writing, and it may even be extended to include the work of editorial supervision. Similarly there is often room for discussion as to how much precisely was embraced in the settled purpose of the author of a great book' [p. 63].

'It may indeed be said to be the almost universal verdict of Protestant theology that Scripture is not the pure product of a divine causality which employed the human agent as a mere instrument, and which guaranteed trustworthy information on every topic which finds a place in Scripture; while there is a growing recognition in Apologetics that well-meant attempts to uphold the theory, though welcome to a certain devout and decisive type of mind, are a real source of weakness and even of discredit' [p. 65].

'The various theories of Inspiration reflect the fact that we are ignorant of the precise mode in which the Divine Spirit operated so as to produce the particular result which was reached in the making of Scripture. As a fact, we cannot hope to analyse the process completely, and especially to disentangle what was due to a divine illumination of the prophetic mind from what was due to the influence of a superintending Providence. But the uncertainty as to the precise mode and range of the divine activity in the making of Scriptures does not subvert the main position which was affirmed in the doctrine of inspiration, viz. that the Bible is a unique gift of God, and in particular that it

perfectly serves the purpose for which it was designed as the trustworthy source of our knowledge of the Christian revelation, and as the sovereign means of grace. . . . It may be added that a demonstration that it contains a human element of ignorance and error can no more prejudice its claims to be the Word of God than a residuum of sin in his character deprives a believer of the title to be called a child of God' [pp. 66-7].—Professor W. P. Paterson, D.D., *The Rule of Faith*, 1914.

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#### APPENDIX D—Ch. II. p. 41

##### THE NAME 'APOSTLES' CREED'

' IN regard to the name Apostles' Creed, we may note that it is only of late years that the title has been confined, even in the West, to the symbol now before us. And it seems that no one gave the title to the Western germ of the document before the beginning of the fifth century. Before that time this designation *Apostolic* was much more freely used. Thus the canon of Irenaeus was called Apostolic; the Constitutions are Apostolic, and speak of the Explanation of the Apostolic preaching; Lucian mentions the Evangelical and Apostolical tradition; Cyprian, the "Praedicatio Apostolica."

' Ussher adduces proofs that the Nicene Creed was, at times, designated as the Apostolic Creed: and I have mentioned already that in one of the manuscripts at St. Gall referred to by Dr. Caspari, both the Nicene and the Roman Creeds are designated as "Symbolum Apostolorum." Thus when we meet with this title in the first ten centuries, we must be cautious not to assume that the Symbol meant is that to which we now confine the name.'—Swainson, *The Nicene and Apostles' Creeds*, 1875, p. 154.

## APPENDIX E—Ch. II. p. 40

## THE ROMAN CHURCH AND THE DIRECT APOSTOLIC AUTHORSHIP OF THE 'APOSTLES' CREED'

'THE Roman Catechism was proposed by the Council of Trent, which entered upon some preparatory labours, but at its last session committed the execution to the Pope [Pius IV., *died* 1565]. The object was to regulate . . . popular religious instruction and to bring it into harmony with the decisions of the Council. . . . The Catechism . . . was finally completed in July 1566, and published by order of Pope Pius V., in September 1566, and soon translated into all the languages of Europe. . . . The work is intended for teachers, as the title *ad Parochos* indicates, not for pupils. It is a very full manual of theology, based upon the decrees of Trent.'

The Roman Catechism, Part I. ch. i. Qu. 2, declares—

'Those things, therefore, that Christian men ought in the first place to hold are what the leaders and teachers of the faith, the holy apostles by the inspiration of the Divine Spirit, have specified in the twelve articles of the Symbol. For when they had received the command from the Lord to be ambassadors for Him and go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, they judged that a formula of the Christian faith ought to be put together, no doubt that they all should realise and utter it and that there should be no divisions (schisms) among them.'—*Libri Symbolici Eccl. Cath.*, ed. Streitwolf and Klener, Tom. i. p. III, quoted by Schaff.

See Schaff, *History of the Creeds of Christendom*, 1877, pp. 100-1 and 23.

Modern Roman Catholic Catechisms in English seem to limit themselves to declaring that the Creed is 'supposed' or is 'popularly supposed' to have been composed by the Apostles.

## APPENDIX F—Ch. III. p. 73

MEANING AND ORIGIN OF THE TERM  
'HOMOIOUSIOS'

THE meaning of the cardinal term *ὁμοούσιος* to the several theological parties in the Church during the fourth century is the subject of an elaborate monograph by J. F. Bethune-Baker, B.D., *The Meaning of Homoousios in the Constantinopolitan Creed*, published by the Cambridge University Press, 1901. The fanciful view combated in this monograph regarding the acceptation of the term *ὁμοούσιος* at the Council of Constantinople, A.D. 381, as that view has been set forth by Zahn and more fully by Harnack, is thus stated by Mr. Bethune-Baker :—

[Pp. 3-4.] 'It is maintained that though Homoousios triumphed, yet it was accepted in the sense of Homoi-ousios ; and much is made of the opposition at the Council of Constantinople between what is called the "old" (Nicene, Western, and Alexandrian) and the "new" (Antiochene, Cappadocian, Asiatic) orthodoxy, though it is admitted that this opposition is only partly known to us.

'Of old, it is argued, it had been the unity of the Godhead that had stood out plain and clear ; the plurality had been a mystery. But after the Council of Alexandria in 362 it was permitted to make the unity the mystery—to start from the plurality and to reduce the unity to a matter of likeness ; that is to say, to interpret Homo-ousios as Homoi-ousios, so changing the "substantial" unity of being into mere likeness of being.

'This is, in effect, to say that it was permitted to believe in three beings with natures like each other ; *οὐσία* receiving a sense more nearly equivalent to "nature" than to "being." And so instead of one Godhead, existing permanently—eternally—in three distinct forms or spheres of existence, there would be three forms of existence of like nature with one another, which together make up the

Godhead. Such, it is said, was the Catholic faith as held by the leaders of the Church in the East and in the West (though more particularly in the East) at the end of the Arian controversy.'

Harnack's view in his own words is also given.

After the fullest historical consideration of the use of the term by the several parties and at the successive periods of the controversy, Mr. Bethune-Baker's summing up is:—

[Pp. 63-4.] 'Such a conclusion would indeed be a scathing satire on the work of councils and theologians. . . . The Nicene Creed again affirmed—its chief watchword proclaimed: and all in a different sense! the sense of that very rival term which did not furnish any safeguard against Arian conceptions, the indefinite term of futile compromise, which could satisfy neither Nicene nor Arian. . . .

'But historical truth demands that every student in turn shall weigh for himself the evidence from which the historian has to draw his inductions. He must not accept without examination theories which seem to him to be at variance with the facts, even though they are championed by scholars of highest repute. And so, in regard to the subject of this investigation, he is entitled to ask for more evidence than has yet been produced to justify the use of such terms as the "neo-Nicene party" and the "new sense" of *ὁμοούσιος*, when by these terms it is meant that for the doctrine declared at the Council of Nicaea was substituted, and accepted at Constantinople and ever afterwards by the Church, another doctrine—a doctrine which declared the Son to be not "of the same" but of like *οὐσία* with the Father.'

An interesting conclusion with regard to the Western origin of the word *ὁμοούσιος* as used in the Nicene Creed is set forth by Mr. Bethune-Baker on p. 6 [note]:—

'I have come to realise much more clearly that *ὁμοούσιος* in the Creed is not as I, in common with many others, had supposed, a product of Greek philosophical thought, but rather of Latin theology. It is to the West we must

look for the meaning it had to the framers of the Nicene Creed—and in the West in particular to Tertullian, who so amazingly anticipated the later definitions of the Creeds. The meaning of *οὐσία*, moreover, and the permanent difference between it and *φύσις* (as in Latin between *substantia* and *natura*) has grown much more distinct. And the investigation of the history of the term *persona* and its theological usage has brought into clear relief the close relation subsisting between it and the corresponding Greek expressions which were used, and the difference between them all and our own term “person.”’

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#### APPENDIX G—Ch. vii. p. 134

##### PAPAL INFALLIBILITY AS SUPERSEDING CREEDS

‘It has seen the pope made the infallible judge of doctrine, and practically of fact also, with the divinity of the Church centred in him as it never was before. If the old creeds are not abolished, they have long ceased to belong to the working part of the system. The battle of the Reformation was to free them from the heterogeneous traditions heaped on them in the Middle Ages, which were soon reduced to a hard-and-fast system by the Council of Trent; and now the Tridentine doctrine is itself antiquated by the developments of the nineteenth century. Tradition as a source of doctrine is hardly less obsolete than Scripture now that the personal infallibility of the pope has placed it in his power to make any other ground of belief superfluous, or at best secondary.’—Gwatkin, *Knowledge of God*, vol. ii. pp. 217-18.

. . . ‘An infallible Church is of necessity “irreformable,” or, in plain language, incorrigible. The future evolution of its doctrine now depends on the action of future popes; and that is largely beyond prediction, though we are not unlikely to hear something more about St. Anne, St. Joseph, the Sacred Heart, the *de fide* necessity of the



temporal power, and such like. But while we cannot safely say what they will do with their infallibility, there is one thing we can say for certain they will not do. It is the idlest of idle dreams to imagine that they will ever use it to reverse the long evolution of Latin Christianity. No reform is possible—only revolution.’—*Ibidem*, vol. ii. p. 219.

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APPENDIX H—Ch. XIV. p. 213

CREED SUBSCRIPTION IN SCOTLAND

THE dissatisfaction with the formula of subscription and with the Confession itself continued notwithstanding these authoritative declarations by the Church conferring liberty of belief in ‘matters which do not enter into the substance of the faith’ [1889] and in ‘less important determinations also contained in it,’ viz. the Confession of Faith [1901]. Accordingly in 1903, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland declared by a very large majority over other motions ‘that the Confession of Faith is to be regarded as an infallible rule of Faith and Worship only in so far as it accords with Holy Scripture interpreted by the Holy Spirit.’ Finally, when it became apparent that an appeal would be made to Parliament by the United Free Church of Scotland in order to have restored to it some of the property lost by the decision of the House of Lords in favour of the Free Church of Scotland, 1904, it was resolved by the Committee on Church Interests of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland that Parliament should be asked to pass an Act consenting to subscription to the Confession of Faith ‘according to such formula as may from time to time be prescribed by the General Assembly.’ The General Assembly of 1905 unanimously approved of the Bill as drafted.

The Act of Parliament actually passed, viz. the ‘Churches (Scotland) Act, 1905,’ repealed those words in the Acts of 1693 and 1707 which bound the subscribers of the Confession to a declaration of personal and constant

adherence to the Confession of Faith, and enacted that the formula of subscription in future 'be such as may be prescribed by Act of the General Assembly.' So far as it concerns doctrine, the formula finally approved and prescribed in 1910 runs thus: 'I hereby subscribe the Confession of Faith, declaring that I accept it as the Confession of this Church, and that I believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith contained therein.' Ministers at their ordination and probationers when receiving licence subscribe the above formula.

The United Free Church of Scotland in 1900, among its first public decisions after the Union, 'adopted the Declaratory Acts by which each of the Churches had, before the Union, claimed a measure of independence of the Confession, and in her new Formula and Questions extended that liberty still further.'

See Professor James Cooper, *Confessions of Faith and Formulas*, 1907; *Creed Revision in Scotland*, 1907.

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## APPENDIX I

### THE CHIEF ANCIENT CREEDS

#### OLD ROMAN CREED

1. I believe in God the Father Almighty ;
2. And in Christ Jesus His only Son, our Lord,
3. Who was born of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary ;
4. Was crucified under Pontius Pilate and buried ;
5. On the third day he rose from the dead ;
6. Ascended into the heavens ;
7. Sitteth on the right hand of the Father ;
8. Whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead ;
9. And in the Holy Ghost,
10. The holy church,
11. The forgiveness of sins,
12. The resurrection of the flesh. AMEN.

## THE APOSTLES' CREED

1. I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth ;
2. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
3. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary,
4. Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried ;
5. He descended into hell ; the third day he rose again from the dead ;
6. He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty ;
7. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
8. I believe in the Holy Ghost ;
9. The holy catholic church ; the communion of saints ;
10. The forgiveness of sins ;
11. The resurrection of the body ;
12. And the life everlasting. AMEN.

## ORIGINAL NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only-begotten, that is, of the essence (=οὐσία, substance) of the Father ; God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten not made (ποιηθέντα), the same in essence (=ὁμοούσιος, of one substance) with the Father ; by whom all things were formed (=ἐγένετο, made), both those in heaven and those on earth ; who for us men and for our salvation came down, and was incarnate, was made man, suffered, and rose again the third day, ascended into the heavens, and shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

And in the Holy Ghost.

But those who say—There was a time when he was not ; or, Before he was begotten he was not ; or, He was formed out of non-existent things ; or affirm that the Son of God is of another substance or essence (*ὑποστάσεως ἢ οὐσίας*), or is created, or mutable, or variable—these men the catholic and apostolic church of God anathematizes.

#### TRADITIONAL NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made ; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, and was made man ; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead ; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the prophets ; in one holy catholic and apostolic church ; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. AMEN.

#### ATHANASIAN CREED

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic Faith : which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

And the catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance.

For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one; the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal—such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost; the Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate; the Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible; the Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternal, but one eternal; as also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible. So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty; and yet they are not three Almighties, but one Almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord; and yet not three Lords, but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord, so are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say, there be three Gods, or three Lords.

The Father is made of none; neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.

And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other; none is greater, or less than another; but the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal.

So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity,

and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation, that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man ; God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds ; and man, of the substance of his mother, born in the world : perfect God, and perfect man ; of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting ; equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead ; and inferior to the Father, as touching his manhood.

Who, although he be God and man, yet he is not two, but one Christ ; one, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God ; one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of Person ; for as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ.

Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead ; he ascended into heaven ; he sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty ; from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give account for their own works : and they that have done good shall go into life everlasting ; and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.

This is the catholic Faith ; which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.

FROM THE DEFINITION OF FAITH OF THE COUNCIL OF  
CHALCEDON, A.D. 451

Following, then, the holy Fathers, we all unanimously teach that our Lord Jesus Christ is to us one and the same Son, the self-same perfect in Godhead, the self-same

perfect in Manhood ; truly God and truly man ; the self-same of a rational soul and body ; co-essential with the Father according to the Godhead, the self-same co-essential with us according to the manhood ; like us in all things, sin apart ; before the ages begotten of the Father as to the Godhead, but in the last days, the self-same, for us and for our salvation (born) of Mary the Virgin theotokos (mother of God) as to the manhood ; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten ; acknowledged in two natures unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably ; the difference of the natures being in no way removed because of the union, but rather the properties of each nature being preserved, and (both) concurring into one Person and one Hypostasis (substance) ; not as though He were parted or divided into two Persons, but one and the self-same Son and only-begotten God, Word, Lord, Jesus Christ ; even as from the beginning the prophets have taught concerning Him, and as the Lord Jesus Christ Himself hath taught us, and as the symbol of the Fathers hath handed down to us. These things having been defined by us with all possible accuracy and care, the holy and oecumenical Synod hath decreed that it is unlawful for any one to present, write, compose, devise, or teach to others any other creed.

‘ TE DEUM LAUDAMUS ’

We praise Thee, O God : we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.

All the earth doth worship Thee : the Father everlasting.

To Thee all angels cry aloud : the heavens, and all the powers therein.

To Thee cherubin and seraphin continually do cry,

‘ Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth ;

Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Thy glory.’

The glorious company of the apostles praise Thee.

The goodly fellowship of the prophets praise Thee.

The noble army of martyrs praise Thee.

The holy church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee ;

The Father of an infinite majesty ;

Thine honourable true and only Son ;

Also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.

Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ ;

Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.

When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man, Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.

When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

Thou sittest at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father.

We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge.

We therefore pray Thee, help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.

Make them to be numbered with Thy saints in glory everlasting.

O Lord, save Thy people, and bless Thine heritage.

Govern them and lift them up for ever.

Day by day we magnify Thee ;

And we worship Thy name ever world without end.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin.

O Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us.

O Lord, let Thy mercy lighten upon us, as our trust is in Thee.

O Lord, in Thee have I trusted : let me never be confounded.



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